

Wms B910 A THE 10
Rector of Sutton

Committed with the

Dean of St. Paul's,

OR,

A DEFENCE of Dr. STILLING-
FLEET's *Irenicum*, his Discourses of
Excommunication, *Idolatry*, and other
Writings; against his late Sermon,

Entituled, THE

Mischief of Separation.

BY

The Author of the *Christian Temper*.

In a Letter to a Friend.

By John Bonnet

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An Epistle to the Reader,

By a Friend of the Author's.



He Reverend Author is one of that Christian Temper, that he does not in the least design in these Sheets to blemish the Reputation of the learned and reverend Dean, but only to infer from his own Writings, an honest Defence of the Nonconformists Practise, and their just discharge from the Imputation of Schism.

Possibly, some may judge the Nonconformists disingenuous, in retorting the Doctor's Irenicum upon himself, which he is willing (considering his present Circumstances) should be stifled, and not brought into Judgment against him: Yet those that truly love and honour him, have that Charity to believe that preferment has not extinguished that Catholick Spirit of his which appears in that excellent Book, at least they hope he will not when he comes to die, repent that he did once offer such excellent Weapon-Salve, which if it had been applied, our Churches Wounds would have been in a great measure healed. But to many it is apparent that the Doctor does still retain the same Sentiments; for he has said that in other Treatises, which is a sufficient Plea for the Dissenters. I shall only cite two or three Passages, out of his Treatise of the Idolatry of the Church of Rome, which was published since he came from Sutton to a higher Station in the Church, (which Passages some judge to be a sufficient Answer to his Sermon of May 3.) viz.

Pag. 7. (Edit. 1.) We are sure that wilful Ignorance, or choosing a worse Church before a better, is a damnable Sin, and, unrepented of, destroys Salvation.

P. 8. A Christian as a Christian is bound to choose the Communion of the purest Church, and not to leave that for a corrupt one, though called never so Catholick. And in Pag. 43. The Papist in reply to the Doctor says, I agree so far with him, that every Christian is bound to choose the Communion of the purest Church.

And not only the Doctor, but several other eminent Men of the Church of England, have in their Writings said enough to excuse the Nonconformists, and to infer the great Mischiefs of Imposition, I shall only instance in two or three Passages out of Bishop Taylor's Cases of Conscience, 'tis well known what reverence that Author's Books are in at this time, even with those

To the Reader.

that are most zealous for the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England.

Rule 2. Pag. 222. (first Edit.) *speaking of the commanding Power of the Church, he says, This is to be added, that because this power is such* — it is only left to the People to do it or not, under pain of Sin, but they are not to incur spiritual Censures upon the stock of non-compliance in things not simply necessary, or of essential Duty — Page 301. Ecclesiastical Laws must be imposed so as to leave our Liberty unharmed.

Pag. 303. Ecclesiastical Laws are made relative to time and place, to Persons and Occasions, subject to all changes, fitted for use and the advantage of the Churches, ministering to Edification, and complying with Charity. Whatsoever Ecclesiastical Law hath not these Conditions, the Churches ought not to receive, because they are Impediments, not Advantages to the Service of God : if they be thus qualified, no good Man will refuse them ; if they be not, they are the Laws of Tyrants, not of Spiritual Fathers.

Pag. 310. Laws of burthen are always against Charity.

P. 314. Ceremonies oblige no longer than they minister to the end of Charity.

Rule 20. Pag. 323. Ecclesiastical Laws must ever promote the Service of God, and the good of Souls, but must never put a snare or stumbling-block to Consciences—. The Authority which the Lord hath given is for Edification, and not for Destruction, 2 Cor. 10.8. & 13.10.

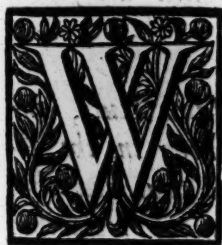
Pag. 325. — Tho significant Ceremonies can be for edification to the Church in some Degree, and in some Persons, yet it's to be considered whether the introducing of such things, doth not destroy the Church, not only in her Christian Liberty, but in the Simplicity, and Purity, and Spirituality of her Religion, by insensible changing it into Ceremonial and External Service. —

Ibid. — A symbolical Rite of humane Invention, to signify what it does not effect, and then introduced into the solemn Service of God, is so like those vain Imaginations and Representations forbidden in the second Commandment, that the very suspicion is more against Edification, than their use can pretend to. — *With many more Passages of of the like Nature, which the reverend Mr. Baxter hath gathered together out of the said Bishop Taylor's Cases of Conscience, in his second part of the Nonconformists Plea, from pag. 89. to pag. 107.*

The Reader is desired to excuse the *Errata*, the Author being far from the Press.

QUERIES.

Query I.



Whether this Sermon of the Doctor's be more likely to convince, or his first Writings to confirm Dissenters? And whether he be more uninterested now (See his several Conferences, pag. 147.) or less fallible? Or whether his Readers (that weighing the Reason of his former Hypothesis, were drawn to be much of his Mind) must now change their Judgments without his giving better Reason to the contrary, that is, without confuting a considerable part of his Irenicum; only upon his declaring, that his Opinion concerning those Matters is now changed, or saying Older and Wiser, that he hath since considered things better, or that he now sees further, and would not yeild so far as before (being set on higher Ground?) See several Conferences, pag. 148.

II. (Upon the Epistle, beginning of the second Page) *Whether a lasting Union be impossible to be attained, without submission to the present establish'd Rule? Or whether it were not more possible and easy to be attained by a Rule of mutual Forbearance?*

III. *Whether a Man of Peace (as the Doctor no doubt would be accounted) that (I suppose) would not pretend exemption from that great Duty of studying the things that make for Peace and Unity, and that prayeth (as Serm. pag. 3.) "God deliver us from such cruel ways of Peace, and such destructive means of Unity (as the Roman Church useth) may not upon second, and serious Thoughts find out another way to Peace and Union among us, viz. That peaceable Dissenters (agreeing with the Church of England in all things necessary) be tolerated (though they*

they cannot in all things comply with the late establish'd Rule?) Which if it could once be obtained of Rulers, Conformists then would not have that occasion or encouragement to fly out against their Brethren as Separatists, and Schismatics; as on the other hand Non-Conformists might not have the like occasion to entertain hard Thoughts of them again, as their Accusers, and such as would instigate Rulers, Magistrates, and others to a further severe prosecution of them?

IV. If none were tolerated in the Ministry, or in Communion with the Church, but those whose faults were no greater than the Non-Conformity of sober Dissenters, whether we should not have very few Ministers left in England, and very thin Congregations? Or whether indeed a total extirpation of the Ministry, and utter dissolution of the Church would not follow on it?

V. Whether the Apostle requiring all to walk by the same Rule, intended any other Rule, than what was given to the Church in the Apostles time? Whether it be not the same Rule, which all that had then attained to the Knowledge, Belief and Profession of Christianity, were then obliged to walk by, and all Christians ever since? And whether the Christian Church in the Apostles times had any such Rule, as that to which the Doctor would have us all conform? And if Men will look in the present establish'd Rule, as consequently binding, when established, whether they must not suppose Men now to have Authority so far equal with the Apostles? And that all other Christians (at least, that hear of the Rule established in England) sin against that Apostolical Precept, Phil. 3. 16. that comply not with England's establish'd Rule? Or else must they not say, that with the Apostle, that is still the same Rule, which is one thing here in the Church of England, and which is another quite different in other Churches, as in the Churches of France, Holland, &c.

VI. Whether it be sinful separation for such Ministers and Christians as conform not hand over head to any publicly established Rule, to assemble for the Worship of God? Whether must we not worship God, but only according to such Rules as our Governors please to establish? If we are not ever bound to conform to the Rules such may establish, or to neglect God's publick Worship, What Limits are to be set here? And how may we be put out of doubt, that we are so bound to the present Rule established?

VII. Whe-

VII. *Whether it can ever be proved sinful for Rulers to suffer Ministers and Christians to worship God, that would worship him as near as they can according to Scripture Rule, if they cannot be satisfied they should do so complying with the present establish'd Rule? Or whether Rulers might not lawfully tolerate such? And whether it would not be very sinful for such Dissenters either wholly to omit worshipping God publicly, or to worship God (against their Judgment and Consciences) according to the established Rule?*

VIII. *If "The preserving the Peace of the Church, and preventing "Separation, was the great Measure the Apostle went by, (as the Doctor says, Serm. pag. 15.) Whether this should not also be a measure to other Church-Governors, and those Church-Guides that pretend to follow the Apostle's Example? And whether such as are for enforcing things unnecessary, and doubtful at least, if not sinful, which they cannot but know will sadly disturb, and greatly divide the Church, whether (I say) such herein keep to the Apostles Rule and Measure?*

IX. *When many highly conformable Preachers with many of their Hearers fall far short of sober Non-Conformists, as not being so much conformed to the Scripture Rule in their Doctrine and Faith, Worship, Life and Practice, why may not these be taken to belong to the Church, as well as the former, unless greater stress be laid on Conformity to Man's Rule, than on Conformity to God's Rule?*

X. *When those many hundreds of Non-Conformists were lawful Ministers and publick Preachers before they were put out by the established Rule, and had so continued, had it not been for such a Rule established, notwithstanding their Judgment was the same it is; Whether may it not seem a little strange, that they should cease to be Ministers, or quite forfeit their Ministerial Liberty, merely for Non-Conformity to such an established Rule, when they had a valid Call unto, and could perform all Acts of their Ministerial Function without it, and when it might be more questioned, Whether indeed they deserved to have their Liberty continued, if they had conformed to such a Rule, as whether they did not Conform, merely to keep in their Places against their Judgments? And how little Hope was there, that such would be faithful to God, and the Souls of Men in the Ministry, that cared not to be so unfaithful to their own Souls, acting against their Consciences? If they*
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forfeit

forfeit not their Liberty by their simple Judgment in those Points, but that indeed such Ministers might very well be at least allowed, and tolerated in any Church of Christ, Whether would they be more unworthy in not practising contrary, or in practising contrary to their Judgments?

XI. Whether there be any true Church (organized) of Apostolical Institution, that hath not the just Right and Power to govern and reform it self? And whether the Doctor will assert this Right and Power in all our Parochial Congregations? If not, how will he prove, that to separate from a Parochial Congregation is to separate from a true Church? If yea, then what will become of his established Rule, which he would have all conform unto?

XII. Whether such as would have all debarred of the ordinary means of Salvation, that cannot enjoy them at their Parish-Church, or that cannot satisfy themselves that Communion there at present is lawful (though we should suppose these last in an error) Whether such (I say) manifest any great Charity towards the Souls of these their poor Brethren, or care what becomes of them? Whether they are not yet to learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice? And if the preaching of the Gospel be ordinarily necessary to the working of Faith, to Mens Conversion and Salvation, and if Conformity to the established Rule (supposing it lawful, yet) is not so necessary; Whether it be right in the sight of God, and pleasing to him, and whether the Souls of others debarred from the means of Salvation have reason to thank them for it, that they are against any Ministers preaching the Gospel, that cannot conform to the established Rule? So, whether they that would have Multitudes untaught, and God's Worship by many neglected, and Lords Days greatly profaned, rather than any but Conformists should be employed in Ministerial work, Whether they do not sadly cross and thwart, and make void the Scripture-Rule, to set up and keep up their Church-Rule?



S I R,



Now return you Dr. *Stillingsfleet's* Sermon, which the other Week you would needs thrust into my Hand, desiring me to peruse, and give you my Notes upon it. To the latter of your Desires (though I then promised nothing) upon the reading of the Sermon, I soon inclined; in part to satisfy your Desire, and in part to satisfy my own Mind. You cannot

but look for many Imperfections in such an hasty Birth. As (it may be) some parts wanting, some redundant, some misplaced. But not having further leisure at present, you will take it as it is, and cover its Defects with a candid Interpretation. I hope you know me so well, as to be perswaded, that though I may err, I would neither be Heretick nor Schismatick.

Epist. Dedic. The Doctor says, *His only design was to prevent any occasion of the Persecution of Dissenters, by finding out a certain Foundation for a lasting Union among our selves.*

Ans. They that design such a thing, should plead for, and endeavour (in their places) the taking off of those Impositions, which are the known Cause of our Divisions, and have made so many Dissenters. As he says, *Irenic. pag. 121.* 'Were we so happy but to take off things granted unnecessary by all, and suspected by many, and judged unlawful by some; and to make nothing the bounds of our Communion, but what Christ hath done, viz. one Faith, one Baptism, &c. allowing a Liberty for matters of indifferency, and bearing with the Weakness of those who cannot bear things which others account lawful, we might indeed be restored to a true primitive Lustre far sooner than by furbishing up some antiquated Ceremonies, which can derive their Pedigree no higher, than from some ancient Custom and Tradition. God will one day convince Men, that the Union of the Church lies more in the Unity of Faith and Affection, than in Uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremonies. (How like Mr. *Corbit* of Church-Unity,

Unity, pag. 30.) 'The Bond of Church-Communion should be something common to strong and weak Christians, &c. (*ibid.* pag. 122.) But not a Word of this found here in all the Sermon.

2. Though we hold Communion with them, as far as we can, yet if we come not up fully to their established Rule, (as, if we are not satisfied to receive the Sacrament kneeling, to bring Children to be Crossed, as well as Baptized, &c.) we are still liable to be prosecuted in their Courts, and troubled. That unless the Doctor hoped by this Sermon to win Dissenters to a full Conformity, his Design was not likely to have success.

Ibid. But, if after themselves are pleased with Condescensions to their own Minds, any think it fit that others should be tyed up, notwithstanding their dissatisfaction, the World will judge it too great partiality in them.

Ans. They would not prescribe Terms to others: but think, that none should prescribe other Terms of Communion, than Christ hath made necessary by his Laws; and that all Christians should look upon themselves as obliged to such Terms. Preface to *Iren.* p. 8, 9. 'It would be strange the Church should require more than Christ himself did; and make other Conditions of her Communion, than our Saviour did of Disciple-ship, &c.

Pag. 2. *Although our differences are such as the wiser Protestants abroad, not only condemn, but wonder at them; yet it hath hitherto puzzled the wisest Persons among us to find out ways to compose them.*

Ans. 1. If we are condemned by others abroad, we may thank our Friends at home, who have misrepresented us to the World; while we have not been allowed to plead for our selves.

2. Yet possibly some Protestant Churches abroad may wonder, that such Proposals as have been made for an Accomodation, should be rejected. See *Petition for Peace*, pag. 9. §. 10. The French Churches (if they be of the same temper, as the Doctor describes them, *Irenic.* p. 122.) must needs wonder more at them, than at us. And so would our Reformers, that composed the Liturgy, if they were alive. As he telleth us (*ibid.*) 'Certainly those holy Men, who did seek by any means to draw in others, at such a distance from their Principles as the Papists were, did never intend by what they did for that end, to exclude any truly tender Consciences from their Communion. That which they laid as a Bait for them, was never intended by them as a Hook for those of their own Profession. But the same reason which at that time made them yeild so far to them then, would now have persuaded them to alter and lay aside those things which yeild mat-

'ter of offence, to any of the same Profession with themselves
'now. (p. 125.)

3. The way to compose our Differences is not so hard to find out. Zanchy thought himself wise enough, to give Counsel in such a Case. See his long Epistle to Queen Elizabeth, Epist. l. 1. Col. 241, &c. The way was, *Non propter vestes totum corpus Ecclesiae perdere*, not to destroy the Body of the Church for Garments sake, &c. Not to disturb the Peace of the Church by urging indifferent things. Col. 245. *Ita certe rebus adiaphoris urgendis, turbare pacem Ecclesiae, & bonos cum impiis, aut etiam bonos inter sese committere, usque adeo iniquum est, ut defendi nullo modo possit, ut non immeritò victorem Episcopum Romanum hoc nomine reprehenderit Irenaeus, &c.* Yea, the Doctor when he recollects himself, knows the way exactly to the composing of our Differences. First, he hath found out the cause of our Differences and Divisions. (And sometimes when the Cause of a Disease is known, it is half cured.) See Preface to his *Irenicum* p. 9. 'Without all Controversy, the main In-let of all 'the Distractions, Confusions and Divisions of the Christian World, 'hath been by adding other Conditions of Church-Communion than 'Christ hath done. Now as to the perfect cure thereof, See *Irenic.* p. 122. 'And therefore, were there that Spirit of mutual Condescension, which was most certainly in *Ecclesiā primo primitiva*, as Gratian 'somewhere speaks, in the first and truly Primitive Church in the 'Apostles times, our Breaches as to this thing too might soon be closed 'up, and the Voice of Schism be heard among us no more. So here he hath discovered to us the way to that, 'Than which nothing ought 'to be more in our Wishes (as he says pag. 1. of his *Serm.*) 'though nothing seems more remote from our Hopes, even the Universal Peace of the Christian World.

Pag. 3. *All Parties pretend to a zeal for Peace, so they may have it in their own way.*

But surely all that would shew themselves good Christians, ought to seek it, and should be content with it in Christ's way. Which is excellently set forth by this Learned Doctor, in the Preface to his *Irenic.* p. 8. 'What Ground can there be, why Christians should not 'stand upon the same terms now, which they did in the time of Christ 'and his Apostles? — What Charter hath Christ given the Church 'to bind Men up to, more than himself hath done? Or to exclude 'those from her Society who may be admitted into Heaven? Will 'Christ ever thank Men at the great Day for — And p. 9. 'Whether 'do they consult for the Churches Peace and Unity who suspend it up-
'on

‘ on such things (as indifferencies?) How far doth the Example of
 ‘ our Saviour or his Apostles warrant such rigorous Impositions? Now
 bath the Doctor upon second thoughts found out a better way, than
 that which he there commends?

2. Some indeed have made it appear, *that it is not Peace they aim at
 but Victory*, as the Doctor saith; yet I cannot see, that this is justly to
 be charged upon those, who have been willing to yeild so far, who
 have made so fair Proposals, and have earnestly petitioned for Peace,
 that could *bear with many things in the Constitution of the Church*, (as *Ser.*
p. 47, 48.) for Peace-sake, which they cannot approve. What though
 some only pretend a Zeal for Peace, must we say, There are no true
 Men in the World, because there are so many Apes that imitate them;
 or that there are no Jewels, because there are so many Counterfeits?
 As the Doctor, *Orig. Sacr. Epist. Ded. p. 10.*

P. 4. *And we may justly hope for a greater Blessing of God upon us, when
 we offer up our joint Prayers and Devotions, &c.*

But (*Irenic. p. 123.*) ‘ It cannot but be looked upon as a Token of
 ‘ God’s severe displeasure against us, if any, though unreasonable Pro-
 ‘ posals of Peace between us and the Papists should meet with such en-
 ‘ tertainment among many; and yet any fair offers of Union and Ac-
 ‘ comodation among our selves, be so coldly embraced and enter-
 ‘ tained.

P. 9. *Wherein the Apostle supposes — 1. The necessity of one fixed and
 certain Rule —*

But (*Irenic. Preface p. 9.*) ‘ We never read the Apostles making
 ‘ Laws but of things supposed necessary. — *Ad. 15. 28.* It was not
 ‘ enough with them that the things would be necessary when they had
 ‘ required them, but they looked on an antecedent necessity either
 ‘ absolute, or for the present State — There were after this great diver-
 ‘ sities of Practice, and varieties of Observations, among Christians, but
 ‘ the Holy Ghost never thought those things fit to be made matters of
 ‘ Laws, to which all Parties should conform; All that the Apostles
 ‘ required as to these, was mutual Forbearance and Condescension to-
 ‘ wards each other in them. The Apostles valued not indifferencies
 ‘ at all — And what reason is there why Men should be so strictly tyed
 ‘ up to such things, &c. From all which we may clearly infer, that
 the Rule spoken of [let us walk by the same Rule] cannot be a Rule
 of unnecessary Orders, Rites, and Ceremonies.

P. 10. *All the question is, what the Apostle means by this Rule, whether
 only a Rule of Charity and mutual Forbearance, with a liberty of different
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practice; or such a Rule which limits and determines the manner of practice, &c.

Ans. 1. That of Charity and mutual Forbearance is but part of that same Rule Christians are to walk by: But a part it is certainly. And therefore,

2. Without question, the Apostle meaneth no such Rules, or Canons Ecclesiastical, as are contrary to the Rule of Charity and mutual Forbearance, with a Liberty of Practice different in some things.

3. This Rule for Uniformity of Practice is the Scripture Rule. This is the Rule to which Christians must conform. And as for other things, we have the Doctor's Word for it, (in that place last cited) 'The Apostles valued not indifferencies at all — And what reason is there why Men should be so strictly tyed up to such things, which they may do, or let alone, and yet be very good Christians still? So that unless the Doctor's Mind be changed, he cannot say, the Apostle meaneth a Rule limiting and determining the practice of such things.

P. 11. By what follows, the Doctor seems to understand some Directions and Rules of Government and Order, given them at *Philippi*, when a Church was first formed among them. Which is a private Interpretation, but fittest for the Doctor's purpose. And yet it will fall short too of proving it Mens Duty to walk by the Rule set up by a Church, till it be proved that such a Church's Rule is consonant and agreeable to the Apostle's Rule. But I cannot meet with any Man of Note, giving such a Sense of the Word [*Rule*] here, as the Doctor would put upon it. That Person, who he says (p. 28.) is of great and deserved reputation among us, understands it of the Doctrine and Rule of Faith before laid down. (*Vid. Calv. in Phil. 3. v. 15, 16.*) — *Sed ante posuit doctrinam in qua consentire, & Regulam ad quam se formare debeant.* And Zanchy, *est Canon fidei, & delectionis*, (so the Rule of Charity, and mutual Forbearance comes in) *viteque Christianæ ad præscriptam formam in sacris literis, conformandæ.* And Grotius, *Regulam hinc intelligit à Christo & Apostolis ejus præscriptam.* Here he understands the Rule prescribed of Christ and his Apostles. *Theodoret*, (who was long before them) *Regulam autem appellavit Evangelicam prædicationem.* And so *Chemnitius* (*Exam. Conc. Trid. par. 1. pag. 33. b.*) *Quis autem est ille Canon?* Where he puts the Doctor's Question, what is that Rule? And answers, *Sine omni dubitatione illa doctrina, &c.* without all doubt (or Controversy) that Doctrine, which the Apostle, being present, delivered to them *vivâ voce*. Even as the Doctor says, 'When the Apostle mentions a Rule, without declaring what it was, we have reason to believe, it was such a Rule which they very well knew, which he had given to them before.

I only add, (which is more perhaps than the Doctor would have,) Yea, and we all know, or may know, what Rule that was, the Apostle plainly affirming, *v. 1.* that he wrote τὰ αὐτὰ the same things, As Chemnitius further adds, *Quis igitur sit Canon Pauli, habemus in ipsius scriptis, idque ipsius testimonio: dicit enim se τὰ αὐτὰ scribere.* What therefore is the Apostle Paul's Rule, we have in his Writings, and that by his own Testimony; for he says, that he did write the very same things (he preached.) I shall take notice but of one more, *scil.* the learned and pious Bishop Reynolds, (*Serm. on Phil. 3. 15, 16.* in his Works, last Edit. *p. 932.*) Who speaks both like a learned Critick, and a sound Divine, thus, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν καὶ νόμῳ, to walk by the same Rule. There seemeth to be a double metaphorical Allusion in the Original Words: The one to a Military March, wherein a Souldier keeps his proper Rank and Station, obeying the Order and Rule which his Commander gives. The other to an Agonistical or Athletical Rule, wherein was drawn a White Line, by which the running of the Horses was to be guided, as the learned Civilian, *Petrus Faber*, in the second Book of his *Agonisticon*, hath observed, *c. 7.* This Line or Rule in our Christian Race is the Word of God, the Rule of Faith, Love, and a Christian Life (just as *Zanchy* before cited) called walking in the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 16.* Walking according to Rule, *Gal. 6. 16.* Thus he. And I hope his Bishoprick did not alter his Mind as to this Matter. Though howsoever Men change, sure it is, God's Word, and Truth is still the same. And surely that Phrase καὶ νόμῳ στοιχεῖν, Where the same Words are used by the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 16.* aimeth at higher Matters than Conformity to Church-Orders.

It is to be considered, whether the Doctor, arguing from this Text, doth any thing more than beg the question. And those whom he mainly opposeth, are for keeping to Scripture-Rule (here intended.) If they cannot come up to the Doctor's established Rule, it is because to them it seems cross to that same Rule all good Christians desire, and all ought to walk by. So then this Text seems to be ill applied to the Doctor's Purpose. Which indeed is a thing, I should least have expected from him, finding him again and again blaming others, in his Discourse of the power of Excommunication, for 'hanging it upon 'some doubtful places of Scripture (*p. 4.*) imprudently fixing the Original of the Power on some ambiguous places of Scripture, which 'may, and (it may be) ought to be taken in a different Sence, (*p. 15.*) Is it not as much amiss in him, when the Apostle is exhorting us to walk by the same Scripture-Rule, the Rule of Faith, &c. to draw it to a Conforming to Church Rules, as if this was the main thing intended

ded? *Turpe est Doctori, &c.* And methinks it looks the more oddly, (to use his own Word, *Serm. p. 38.*) when he hath told the World over and over again, that the Apostles and *primo-primitive* Christians had no such established Rule, nor would the Apostles have established such a Rule, as he urgeth us from this Text to come up to, I wonder how he can believe himself, or can hope to persuade any, that will but a little exercise their thinking Faculty, That the Apostle can mean by the same Rule here, such a Rule as was never established by Christ and his Apostles, nor ever would have been to this day, had they still continued upon Earth.

P. 11. *The Apostles did not leave all Persons to act as they judged fit, but did make Rules determining their Practice, and obliging them to Uniformity therein. For might not Men pretend that these were not things in themselves necessary, and might be scrupled by some Persons, and (p. 12.) therefore were not fit to be imposed upon any? But I do not find that the Apostles on this account did forbear giving Rules in such cases, and to oblige Christians to observe them; and that not on the meer Authority of Apostles, but as Governours of Churches, whose business it is to take care of the welfare and preservation of them.*

Ans. 1. Can the Doctor say, the Apostles made Rules determining their practice, and obliging them to Uniformity in unnecessary and indifferent things? Surely, he hath told us the contrary (*Preface to Iren. p. 9.*) They would lay no other burthen πλὴν τῶν ἐπιναγκῶν τούτων, *Acts 15. 28, 29.* The things there decreed were necessary either *in se*, or *propter aliud*, in themselves, or by consequence, in some other respect. Though not all of them necessary, *semper & ubique*, perpetually and every where; yet at that time necessary, in regard of the present state of things then. Either necessary to prevent their returning to the Sins of their Gentilism, or to prevent their giving offence to the Jews. Not merely made necessary by the Decree of that Council, but in some respects necessary antecedently to that Decree, as the Doctor there observes. And let it be remembered, what he says of other things, that *The Holy Ghost never thought them fit to be made matters of Laws, to which all Parties should conform.* Then, can we believe the Apostles would oblige Christians to Uniformity in such things?

2. Much less would they have imposed things unnecessary, that were scrupled too. The Doctor shall never find that. They that would not the weak should be offended by their own, or others practice (as *Rom. 14. 13, 21. 1 Cor. 8. 9, 13.*) would not have burthened them with such unnecessary Rules, which they knew, either they could not bear, or must cause them to offend.

3. And it is plain, they had no such power given them. They could not do it lawfully. The Power and Authority given to the Apostles, was for Edification, and not for Destruction, 2 Cor. 10. 8. & 13. 10. *Adjuvandum, & non ad officiendum; ad utilitatem & commodum, non ad damnum Ecclesiae.* There is *modus & certus finis hujus potestatis.* And I hope, no Church-Governors (now in the World) have more Authority, than the Apostles had, that they may go further in their Inpositions. The Doctor says well of *the Governours of the Churches, that their business is to take care of the welfare and preservation of them.* And then, how making Rules about unnecessary things, scrupled by many, obliging all to Uniformity therein, and thereby causing rents and divisions in the Society, I say, how this can be for the Welfare and Preservation of it, I am not able to understand. The Doctor says, *Irenic. p. 47.* ‘The least Peg scrued up
‘too high in the Church, soon causeth a great deal of Discord — and
‘quickly puts Mens Spirits out of tune. And when he telleth us, *p. 53.*
‘That in things wholly indifferent in both respects, that is, in a thing
‘neither commanded nor forbidden by God, nor that hath any apparent
‘respect to the Peace and Order of the Church of God, there can
‘be (N.B.) no rational account given, why the nature of such indifferences
‘should be altered by any humane Laws and Constitutions. If
yet he can give us a rational account, why they may be imposed, when they apparently tend to dissention, disunion, and putting things out of order, I shall think he hath a Reach beyond the Moon. If the Church hath power to make such Rules, it is more than he grants to the Magistrate, (*ibid. p. 44, 45.*) ‘The Magistrate hath the power of
‘determining things (undetermined by the Word) so they be agreeable
‘to the Word of God. This last Clause is that which binds (I
‘suppose it should be bounds) the Magistrates Power, that it is not absolutely
‘Architectonical, because all his Laws must be regulated by
‘the general Rules of the Divine Law. Would the making of such Rules be found agreeable to the Word of God? What! when they apparently tend not to Peace, but to Breaches, and Dissentions; not to Order, but to Confusion? Would such tend to Edification?

And further it may be considered, whether this would not be found contrary to some of the Doctor’s own Rules. *Iren. p. 63.* ‘Secondly,
‘That nothing be required, nor determined, but what is sufficiently
‘known to be indifferent in its own nature. And *p. 64.* ‘That no
‘Sanctions be made, nor Mulcts or Penalties be inflicted on such who
‘only dissent from the use of some things, whose lawfulness they at
‘present scruple, till sufficient time and means be used for their information
‘of the nature and indifference of the things, &c. Observe,
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The things themselves must be sufficiently known to be indifferent. And no Judges so fit to decide this Controversy, as 'the sense of the 'primitive Church in the first four Centuries, with the Judgment of 'the reformed Churches, p. 63. Or those three Judges, p. 62. 'The 'Authority of the Scriptures, the Practice of the primitive Universal 'Church, and the tendency of the things to reform mens lives. Now if such care must be taken, such means used to clear up the indifferency of things, it would seem to follow necessarily, they may not be imposed, while they are scrupled, and are not by any of the aforesaid means to be proved indifferent.

P. 12. *The wisdom of Governours lies in preventing the danger of little things —*

And so I think no less in dispensing with more minute things, when great evil and danger attends the strict imposing of them.

Ib.-- *And keeping the zeal of well-meaning Persons within its due bounds.*

It would be known what are those due bounds? Whether it is better to restrain zealous well-meaning Persons from worshipping God at all together, unless they were satisfied to conform to the particular by-Rules of Governours; or indeed to suffer them peaceably to worship the true God in Ordinances of his own appointment, though without following the Governours accidental Rule and mode of worship? But more touching that matter afterwards.

P. 12. *'Those who are engaged below in the valley, fighting in small Parties, and pursuing their advantages, do run into their Enemies Camp before they are aware, &c.*

The Doctor knows this is but a popular Argument. Similes may illustrate a thing, but prove nothing. But why may not such small Parties do some Service, as heartily and resolutely bending their little force against the common Enemy? And otherwise they are like to do none, while the main Body is drawn up within such Banks and Trenches, as rather serve to divide and keep off many of its Friends, than to defend it from its Enemies. 'Tis in vain to talk of such retreating into the Body of the Army, while such Canons are planted against them, such Rules as cut them off. O that it was seriously considered, whether the strict imposing of those things, which keep many at a distance, and hinder their joining with the Body of the Army (to use the Doctor's terms) be indeed of as great consequence, as the Churches Peace, and the preservation of Religion it self? Or whether it be wisdom *perdere substantiam propter accidentiâ*? And they who stand on the higher ground now, should remember, yea, often think of that day, when they shall be set on level ground with others, and have their cause tried

by

by the Rule of God's Word. — Methinks there should be no harm in wishing, that such would have a tender sense, as to the doing any thing that tends to exclude from the Ministry, and from Church-Communion any whosoever, that are not to be excluded by any Rule laid down in God's Word.

P. 13. *It were extreamly desirable that all good and useful Men should enjoy as much satisfaction as might be, —*

Now thanks to the Doctor for this, if he do not unsay it again. — *But if it cannot be attained without running greater hazards of unsetling all, it is then to be considered, whether the general safety, or some Mens particular satisfaction be the more desirable.*

Now if he thinks, that to indulge many good and useful Men as to some small matters (if they may be accounted small matters, that have occasioned so great mischiefs; therefore I will say) things not commanded by God, not necessary in themselves, but many ways of very ill consequence, being rigorously enjoined; things not pertaining to the necessary order and decency required in God's Worship, (so as that the want thereof would render it disorderly and undecent) and things that would really burthen or wound the Consciences of many good and useful Men; I say, if the Doctor thinks, that to condescend to such Men in such things as these, would be to run great hazards of unsetling all; then what he says before would seem to be a meer Complement. And then *Quantum mutatus ab illo?* Then he would make such things necessary. Yet *Irenic. p. 62, 63.* He tells us what bounds must be set in the restraint of Christian Liberty. And the first is, 'That nothing be imposed as necessary, but what is clearly revealed in the Word of God. — *Laqueus est quicquid precipitur ut necessarium quod liberum esse debet.* And *p. 64.* Distinguishing betwixt things indifferent in their own nature, and indifferent as to their use and practice; Thereupon he says thus, 'And when the generality of those who use them, do not use them as indifferent, but as necessary things, it ought to be considered whether in this case such a use be allowable, till Men be better informed of the things they do. Now if there be such danger of unsetling all, supposing they should be indulged as to the use and practice of such things, then it would seem they are made necessary: but then for that reason, we may question whether the use of them be allowable, till we are better informed. If they be not made necessary, methinks good and useful Men might weigh against things indifferent, or unnecessary, or else sure, they are but of little use.

But what danger there would be of unsetling all, by giving just satisfaction to such Men, I cannot discern. Why might not peaceable, good

good and useful Men, that are dissatisfied as to some by-matters, but agree with them in the Doctrine of Faith, and substance of God's Worship, have liberty to serve their God in the Valleys, and they on the higher ground (as the Doctor's Word is) still possess their Dignities and Benefices? And if moving in an higher Sphere, they are of more use, and diffuse their light farther, no good Men should envy at that.

P. 13. What the Doctor observes from *Acts* 15. 28. I take to be answered before, yea, he hath answered himself. *Irenic.* in Preface p. 9. & p. 11. 'The same we hope may remain as the most infallible evidence of the Conformity of our Church of *England* to the Primitive, 'not so much in using the same Rites that were in use then, as in not 'imposing them.

P. 14. Where he speaks of the *Judaizing Christians*, if he would have his dissenting Brethren compared with them, the Comparison seems to be unequal. They were for laying the Yoke on others Necks. Poor Dissenters would think themselves well, if others would not endeavour to bring their Necks under the Yoke. These desire to keep close to the Gospel-Rule, the other in their zeal for the Ceremonies of the Law, were in great danger to be removed from the Gospel.

Ibid. *Notwithstanding all their dissatisfaction, the Apostles continued the same Rule.*

Let us enquire what scruples and dissatisfaction the Doctor meaneth. Either it must be, that the Gentile-Believers were dissatisfied, that they were bound up by that Decree: And then the Answer is, Those things were necessary, as before explained. And if nothing was imposed upon us, but what is alike necessary, then the World might justly blame us for not yeilding to such Impositions. Or it must be that the Judaizing Christians were dissatisfied. And indeed of these the Doctor seems to speak. But then I think, it is against himself. For how were they dissatisfied about the things decreed? Certainly, it was because the Gentile-Believers were left so much at liberty from the observation of the Ceremonies of the Law. But notwithstanding, the Apostles continued the same Rule, because they would lay on them no unnecessary burthen. There was no necessity for imposing Jewish Ceremonies on them; and therefore they would not do it. Those Judaizers thought there was a necessity of Circumcision, and keeping the Law of *Moses*, directly contrary to the Doctrine and Design of the Gospel. The Doctor may say, they scrupled, and were dissatisfied; but plainly they were leavened with such a corrupt Opinion as was by no means to be born with, which would have made Christ and his Death in vain. And therefore there was great necessity for that Decree.

cree. Yea, the Apostle thought not that enough; but again and again in his Doctrine sets himself against it with might and main, shewing the dreadful consequences of it. If Men will call such gross errors, directly contrary to Christ and the Gospel, scruples; yet surely the Doctor cannot but grant, that the scruples of good, honest, well meaning Souls about the lawfulness of some things Men bring into God's Worship, without his Warrant, for any thing they can apprehend, are quite of another Nature. And possibly the Doctor may have occasioned some of their scruples, (and therefore is the more obliged to be favourable towards them) who says, *Iren. p. 36.* 'But as for the way, manner, and circumstances of Worship, we are to follow the positive Laws of God. And *p. 43, 44.* 'First then we say not, that the Magistrate hath a power to revoke, repeal, or alter any Divine positive Law, which we have already shewn. Secondly, we say not, that the Magistrate by his own Will may constitute what new Laws he pleases for the Worship of God. This was the fault of *Jeroboam*, who made *Israel* to sin. Who *p. 67, 68.* distinguisheth betwixt Ceremonies, and matter of meer Decency and Order, for order sake. Saying, 'matters of order and decency are allowable and fitting; but Ceremonies, properly taken for Actions significative, their lawfulness may with better ground be scrupled.

Lay these things together, and the result is this in short, That Apostolical Council, *Acts 15.* made a Decree of things necessary, that was dissatisfying to Judaizers, as being cross to their pernicious Opinions and Practice: Therefore Governors now may decree things unnecessary, that may with better ground be scrupled. But when it is certainly unlawful for private Persons to put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in their Brethrens way, I would fain know how it comes to be lawful for Rulers and Church-Governours so to do.

P. 14. To what the Doctor notes on *Rom. 14. 3.* where he grants a Rule of mutual Forbearance, notwithstanding that Decree made, *Acts 15.* I cannot apprehend the least inconsistency betwixt these; as if the one was set aside, where the other took place. And if the Apostle acted here 'like a prudent Governour—the Church of *Rome* at this time consisting most of Jews—he perswades both Parties to Forbearance and Charity (for preserving the Churches Peace, *p. 15.*) Methinks, by a Parity of reason, where Non-Conformists are more numerous (as in *London, &c.*) more Forbearance might be shewn, to preserve the Churches Peace. But indeed we find, that Charity should as well be exercised towards a single Brother, *1 Cor. 8. 13.*
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The Apostle (who was a Governour in the Church, and not an ordinary Governour) would not offend a weak Brother. Again, the Doctor supposeth here, that there were none in the Church of *Rome* that went about to impose the necessity of keeping the Law of Ceremonies on the Gentile-Christians. But that there were false Apostles in *Rome* at that time, seems to be intimated, *Rom.* 16. 17. [Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.] *Notat hic eos, (says Grotius) qui cum ipsi Judæi non essent, vocatis gentibus imponere volebant Legis Mosaicæ jugum, contra & præcepta Christi pacem commendantis, & præceptum Apostolicum, quod ubiq; Paulus servandum docuit. Acts* 16. 4. And the Apostle might thus exhort them to mark and avoid such false Teachers, and yet in the same Epistle lay down a Rule of mutual Forbearance, and require them to shew Charity towards those who in some points had been seduced by such false Teachers, by which means indeed they might be brought nearer to the Truth, and one to another. As we have it in the Verse before the Doctor's Text. [And if ye be in any thing otherwise minded, &c.] As for those that did not yet so clearly understand the Doctrine of the Gospel, but did still in part adhere to the abolished Ceremonies of the Law, the Apostle would not have them rigorously dealt with, but would have them (as *Beza* says) *Turbas non moveri & benignè tolerari*, in hopes they might come to have the truth further discovered to them. And here it is to be noted, (as *Mr. Corbet* of Church-Unity, p. 19. observes) There was a greater appearance of Reason (then, and in those cases) for despising, censuring, or offending others, than there can be for some Impositions now in question among us, viz. on the one side a fear of partaking in Idolatry, or of eating Meats that God had forbidden, or of neglecting days that God had commanded, as they thought; on the other side a fear of being driven from the Christian Liberty, and of restoring the Ceremonial Law.

P. 14, 15. *Where the false Apostles made use of this pretence of the Levitical Law being still in force, to divide the Churches, and to separate the Communion of Christians; there the Apostle bids them beware of them, and their Practice, &c.*

The Apostle had a zeal for Truth, as well as Peace; for the Doctrine of Christianity, as well as for the Communion of Christians. [Mark those which cause Divisions, contrary to the Doctrine—] See *Gal.* 5. 1, 2.

P. 15. To what the Doctor says there, I return thus, To argue from an obligation lying upon the best Christians to walk by the same

Rule (which the Apostles laid down) to an obligation to comply with another Rule set up, before it be proved agreeable to the Apostles Rule, (to use the Doctor's Words, *Power of Excom. p. 14.*) 'is a 'shortness of Discourse, I cannot but wonder at.

P. 16. *I shall endeavour to search to the bottom of this dangerous Mistake, to which we owe so much of our present Distractions and Fears.*

Whether we owe more here to the necessary dissent, and distance of those that cannot in Conscience consent and comply; or to the Will of those that force them to it, and to those arbitrary Impositions which are indeed the Bar to a full Communion, is the Question now, which will at last be fully decided at God's Bar. The Doctor once thought our 'Breaches irreparable, without retrenching all exorbitances of 'Power, and restoring those Presbyteries which no Law hath forbidden, but only through disuse have been laid aside. See the last Page of his Preface. And whether are these things done? Whether (as he says there, p. 2.) [*the Church it self be not made a Partition-Wall to divide the Members of it.*]

P. 16. *I speak not of the separation or distinct Communion of whole Churches from each other — By whole Churches I mean the Churches of such Nations —*

Yet these whole Churches (as the Doctor calls them) are but parts of the Church Catholick. And the Doctor cannot handsomely deny, but the Church Catholick is primarily in God's intention, and particular Churches (whether National, or Parochial) secondary and accidental; 'Because of the impossibility of all Mens joyning together ' (as he says) for the convenient distribution of Church-Priviledges, 'and administration of Gospel-Ordinances. (But otherwise) If the 'whole World could joyn together in the publick Worship of God, no 'doubt that would be most properly a Church. See *Irenic. p. 154, 155.* Now observe, if the matter stands thus, as the Doctor hath stated it, then either particular Churches ought not to have different established Rules for Communion, such as all good Christians cannot lawfully comply with; (for if all could, all have a right to joyn together) or if any National Church (for instance) hath such a different established Rule, therein it is guilty of making a separation from the Catholick Church: but if any Members of it, hold Communion with it so far as they can, upon true Catholick Principles, though they cannot comply with the said established Rule wherein it goes beyond, such cannot be justly charged with separation. Here I think, we have gained a great Point.

Or else thus, The Doctor hath nothing to say against the separation or distinct Communion of National Churches, though they have their different Rules of Order and Government established. Here he would not charge the one, or other with the sin of separation. As he says, *Irenic. p. 65.* 'He must be a great Stranger in the primitive Church, that takes not notice of the great diversity of Rites and Customs used in particular Churches, without any censuring those who differed from them; or if any by inconsiderate zeal did proceed so far, how ill it was resented by other Christians. As *Victor's* Excommunicating the *Quarto-decimarii*, for which he is so sharply reprov'd by *Irenaeus*, who tells him, that the primitive Christians who differed in such things, did not use to abstain from one anothers Communion for them. *καὶ γὰρ, &c.* as *Socrates* tells us, Those that agree in the same Faith, may differ among themselves in their Rites and Customs, as he largely shews in a whole Chapter, *&c.* And *p. 66, 67.* 'We see the primitive Christians did not make so much of any Uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies; nay I scarce think any Churches in the primitive times can be produced that did exactly in all things observe the same Customs: which might be an argument of moderation in all as to these things, but especially (N.B.) in pretended admirers of the primitive Church. And so he concludes with that known saying of *Austin*, *Indignum est, &c.* It's an unworthy thing for Christians to condemn and judge one another for those things which do not further us at all in our way to Heaven (as the Doctor;) or, which cannot render us more worthy, or unworthy to God. Now *hoc supposito*, and indeed it is undeniable, it will follow, I say, it will follow, If Rulers do but once say, That Minister and Congregation that agree with the true Catholick Church in the same Faith, though they differ as to some Mode or Rites not necessary, (which their Consciences are not satisfied in) are not guilty of the sin of Separation. And then what a charitable Word would that be? And so if I was with the Doctor now, I would be so bold to ask him, How he, and others of his way, that look upon the sin of Separation as so heinous, (as I think some would make it inconsistent with a state of Salvation) can possibly satisfy themselves that they are not accessory to the same, not having endeavoured to the uttermost, to perswade Rulers to speak that good Word, which would have prevented the sin and danger of so many Souls? Would they be thought such as are wholly swayed by a private interest, and so uncharitable, that they care not what becomes of others Souls, and so careless of the Peace and Unity of Christians, which they cannot but say, is a Duty incumbent upon all, so far as possibly

they can, to promote ? This I look upon, as a very healing Principle, (I wish it was more taught and improved,) That Christians may be looked upon as of the same Communion, agreeing in the same Faith, and all that is necessary, though they vary something, as to some Mode, and Rites not necessary. Particular National Churches may differ, as to these, without a Breach of Communion, and of the Peace of the Church ; and why not some particular Congregations, within a National Church, if Men would ? I should think, it must needs be a very preposterous Course to prefer the meer accidentals of Religion and God's Worship, before the substantial parts of the same, or but to make them equal, as they are at least made equal, if we must not have the one without the other.

P. 17. Here I agree with the Doctor, that the notion of a Church does not barely relate to Acts of Worship. And yet when he says, *If this held true, the Church must be dissolved as soon as the Congregation is broken up.*

Perhaps some may be ready to argue *ad hominem*, and put him in mind of his own Words (before cited) *If the whole World could joyn together in the publick Worship of God, no doubt it would be most properly a Church.* Yet would not the Doctor say, the Church was dissolved as soon as such Worship was ended.

P. 17, 18. *And if there be one Catholick Church, consisting of multitudes of particular Churches consenting in one Faith; then why may there not be one National Church from the consent in the same Articles of Religion, and the same Rules of Government and Order of Worship ?*

Ans. 1. The Doctor will grant, a Catholick Church subsists by a Divine Law, and positive Institution of Christ. And if he can say, and prove it, that the National Church of England, as it is now established, so subsists, his dissenting Brethren will thank him for it. They could never yet find *Episcopi Episcoporum*, Lay-Chancellors, &c. Ordinary Officers in the Church by the positive Institution of Christ. Now he tells us (*Power of Excom. p. 6.*) 'That the Exercise and Administration of this Power belongs to the special Officers and Governors of the Church, none else being capable of exercising this Power of the Church, as such, but they on whom it is settled (N.B.) by the Founder of the Church itself. And p. 13. 'I here suppose that Christ hath by a positive Law established the Government of his Church upon Officers of his own appointment, which I have largely proved elsewhere (*Iren. par. 2. c. 2*) Now lay this together with what he saith (*Power of Excom. p. 17.*) having occasion to cite *1 Tim. 5. 17.* I intend not to prove an office of Rulers distinct from Teachers from
hence,

'hence, which I know neither this place nor any other will do : And I doubt it will follow that no Lay-Persons can of Right have Power of Government in the Church, and that the present Constitution is not by the positive Law of Christ.

2. I shall not deny a National Church from consent in the same Articles of Religion, and Rules of Government, and Order of Worship. Such a Church there may be: but then it must be noted, such Articles and Rules ought to be agreeable to the established Rule of the Holy Scriptures. And for any Church to make such things terms of Agreement and Communion, which are not agreeable to that same Rule by which all Christians ought to walk, some tell us it is a schismatical Practice. And so it may happen, that they that so far separate from such a dividing National Church, though they comply not with its established Rule, may yet be found walking by the same Rule, in the true sense of the Doctor's Text. And whether indeed it be agreeable to Scripture Rule, to set down such terms of Communion, as would exclude any, that have a right to Communion, let it be examined. See *Iren p. 122.* 'Certainly the primitive Church, that did not charge 'Mens Faith with such a load of Articles, as now in these latter Ages 'Men are charged with, would much less burthen Men, with imposing doubtful Practices upon them, as the ground of Church-Communion. Yea, but what if Junior Churches think themselves wiser than the Primitive Church in these matters? See *p. 119, 120.* 'Let 'Men turn and wind themselves which way they will, by the very 'same Arguments that any will prove Separation from the Church of 'Rome lawful, because she required unlawful things, as conditions of 'her Communion, it will be proved lawful (*N.B.*) not to conform 'to any suspected or unlawful practice required by any Church Governor upon the same terms, if the thing so required, be after serious 'and sober enquiry, judged unwarrantable by a Man's own Conscience. And withal it would be further considered, whether when 'our best Writers do lay the imputation of Schism, not on those who 'withdraw Communion, but on them for requiring such conditions 'of Communion (whereby they did rather eject Men out of their 'Communion, than the others separate from them.) So then it is not separation, if Men are ejected by others putting such conditions : 'they do not by the same Arguments, lay the imputation of Schism 'on all who require such conditions of Communion, and take it wholly off from those who refuse to conform for Conscience-sake. Whereunto he subjoins the judgment of Mr. *Hales*, in his excellent (though little) Tract (as he says) concerning Schism. He speaking of the
Schism

Schism about Image-Worship, determined by the second Council of Nice, says, In this the Schismatical Party was the Synod it self (whom a little before he calls that Rout) and such as conspired with it. For concerning the use of Images in *Sacriz*, First it is acknowledged by all, That it is not a thing necessary; Secondly, It is by most suspected; Thirdly, It is by many held utterly unlawful. Can then the enjoying of the practice of such a thing (says he) be ought else but abuse? Or can the refusal of Communion here, be thought any other thing than Duty? Thus the learned *Hales*, (lately reprinted with *Miscellan. p. 211.*) so then if there may be a National Church from consent in the same Articles of Religion, Rules of Government, Order of Worship, it seems these should be clear from suspected and unlawful things, that it incur not the censure of a Schismatical Church.

P. 19. *I do not intend to speak of the Terms upon which Persons are to be admitted among us to the exercise of the Function of the Ministry, but of the Terms of Lay-Communion.*

I confess, Sir, these are not to be confounded. You know my mind, by what I wrote about 17 years since, and at least have heard, what has been my practice. I could be satisfied to join in that Worship, wherein I could not officiate as a Minister. You have had my Reasons heretofore. But I conceive the matter which the Doctor drives at in this Sermon, cannot be fully decided without a due consideration of the case of the ejected Ministers, which you see me led to towards the end of these Papers.

P. 20. *In the judgment of some of the most impartial Men of the Dissenters at this day, although they think the case of the Ministers very hard on the Account of Subscriptions and Declarations required of them; yet they confess very little is to be said on the behalf of the People, from whom none of these things are required. So that the People are condemned in their Separation, by their own Teachers.*

Ans. And would not the Doctor himself have thought it an hard case with Ministers heretofore? See *Irenic. p. 64.* 'I am sure it is 'contrary to the primitive Practice, and the Moderation then used, to 'suspend or deprive Men of their Ministerial Function for not conforming in Habits, Gestures or the like. Was he sure of it, when he wrote this, and can he be sure of the contrary now? Or would the primitive Church by no means have suspended or degraded Ministers for not conforming in an Habit, or Gesture; did the Primitive Church 'never think it worth the while to make any standing Laws for Rites and 'Customs that had no other original but Tradition, (as in Preface to *Iren. p. 10.*) and yet would it have been thought worth the while then

to have imposed a great deal more than the use of an Habit, Gesture, or old Custom, things the lawfulness whereof might have been much more suspected, and then suspend and degrade those, that would not submit unto them? Surely, we should have better thoughts than so of the Primitive Church.

One thing had almost escaped me, (beginning of p. 20.) *I will not say, there hath been a great deal of Art used to confound these two, (and it is easy to discern to what purpose it is.)* But thus the Doctor in effect says, what he says, I will not say, there hath been a great deal of Art used—As if being crafty we caught People with guile, I hope it is not so. As for my self, many know what my Principle and Practice hath been. I have never used any Art to draw off any from attending on the Ministry of the legal publick Preachers. At my first turning out I did seriously bend my Studies, to satisfy my self and others of the lawfulness of joyning still with the publick Congregations, and thereupon I wrote on that Subject, and was willing my Papers should go into the hands of any that desired them, not only Conformists, but those of the Congregational Perswasion too, besides diverse others. When the King's Licences came forth, I having opportunity (at that time in a Journey) to see and converse with diverse Ministers in my Predicament, made it my Business where I came to perswade to such an use of that Liberty, as might give least offence to our Conforming Brethren. And still to this day, I would so time my work, as not to hinder others of any benefit they might get under their Ministration. And I think I may say, the greatest part of those that go under the Name of Dissenters, or Non-Conformists, are of the same Mind, and do practise accordingly. I know many Ministers in one little Town (if we may call such a number as four, a many) not one of whom would be employed there, while the legal publick Preacher is officiating, but would rather choose to hear him. How many of us that have been almost 18 years out of Place, that can appeal to God, the searcher of all Hearts, we have not used any Art to take People off from publick Ministers by Law allowed, if they had any tolerable fitness for Ministerial Work. No, rather we wish, and should be heartily glad (I hope) to see them more serviceable, more successful, than ever we have been. Truly, I am more pierced with such an uncharitable Insinuation of the Doctors, than with the dint of any of his Arguments.

Yet I must confess we are not all of a mind. Some do not think it lawful to join with them. Now suppose them to be in an error, yet I question whether it would not be uncharitable to say, They use a great deal of Art—and it is easy to discern to what purpose it is. What they

they do, or do not, under those apprehensions they have at present, is in the simplicity of their hearts. Possibly, another method than hath been taken, might reconcile them to that Church-Communion, which at present they dare not own.

P. 20. *But how they can preach lawfully to a People, who commit a fault in hearing them, I do not understand.*

I hope, it will be found neither unlawful for them to preach (being true Ministers still) nor unlawful for others to hear them. But I am not come to that yet. At present I say but this, The Doctor no doubt knows, he hath divers that come out of other Parishes ordinarily to hear him, which is a thing contrary to his established Rule. Then do they not in his judgment commit a fault in hearing him? Then how does he satisfy himself that he can preach lawfully to them? I am *sumus ergo pares*. Now may not he and his Dissenting Brethren shake hands? If they are not warning their Hearers in every Sermon to take heed of the Principles, and Sin of Separation, is the Doctor in every Sermon he preaches warning the People to take heed of leaving their Parish-Church, and charging any that belong to another Parish to depart?

P. 20. *I do not confound bare suspending Communion in some particular Rites, which Persons do modestly scruple, and using it in what they judge to be lawful; with either total or at least ordinary forbearance of Communion in what they judge to be lawful; and proceeding to the forming of separate Congregations, i. e. under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the established Religion allows. And this is the present case of Separation which I intend to consider, and to make the sinfulness and mischief of it appear.*

Bona verba, quæso. Here is the stating of the case the Doctor hath determined in his Sermon.

Here I observe, the Doctor seems to allow a partial Separation. That is, 'a bare suspending Communion in some particular Rites, which Persons do modestly scruple, while they use it in what they judge lawful. For which (because he says so little here) See *Iren. p. 117, 118.* 'withdrawing Communion from a Church in unlawful or 'suspected things, doth not lay Men under the guilt of Schism. Which 'because he knew it might meet with opposition from those Men, who 'will sooner call Men Schismatics than prove them so, he there offers 'reason for it. Now some modestly scruple a particular Rite, and Communion in the Liturgy, as being imposed: but what the Doctor will say to that I know not; though this I know, he hath said something that would seem to favour them. And his so much commended *Hales* says, 'Wheresoever false or suspected Opinions are made a piece of

of the Church-Liturgy, he that separates is not the Schismatick. *Miscellan, p. 218.*

2. Methinks, those Dissenters (as they are called) that do ordinarily hold Communion with them in God's Worship, so far as it is his Worship, should not fall under the Doctors lash here; though they have other occasional Meetings besides.

3. A total forbearance of Communion with them, I confess, has a deep sound. As if one would not have Communion with them at all, though never so fair an opportunity offered it self. I would hope the far greatest part of the publick Congregations in *England* may still be looked upon as parts of Christ's visible Church, that have the substantials of God's Worship, such as at least upon occasion Christians might lawfully join in. But if there be an ordinary forbearance, it is much what the same, as if it was total, with the Doctor. And yet indeed till more forbearance and condescension is shewn, or better satisfaction given than I can find in this Sermon before me, I must forbear passing so severe a censure in the case, as I see others do. Yea, some whom I hope to meet in the General Assembly at last, that would refuse to hear me for that very cause the Doctor speaks of sometimes, that I own many Parochial Churches to be true Churches; yet could I be satisfied upon occasion, to join with them, having one that I could look upon as called and separated to the work of the Ministry among them. Though some would count me a Fanatick for it, yet I hope I am a Catholic.

4. The Doctor takes in a *proceeding to the forming of separate Congregations, i. e. under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the established Religion allows.*

Now 1. I would not understand the Doctor so, as if he was for a compliance with any Religion that is uppermost, whatever it be, true or false. I do not look upon him as such a Latitudinarian, that would plead for Mr. *Hobs* his publick Conscience, [of whom the report goes, that when some serious counsel was given him concerning his Soul, and his everlasting State a little before his Death; he swore, 'If I was 'at Heaven, what a fall should I have? As if he would have the World know, he lived and died an Atheist. *Qualis vita, finis ita.*] But I should do the Reverend Doctor a manifest wrong, if after all he has written against the Papists, and for the justifying of our separation from *Rome*, I did suppose, that he would not be for separation in this case, should the *Romish* Religion ever come to be established. He knows when under *Arrian* Bishops, 'many both of the Clergy and People, 'who resolved to adhere to the true Faith, withdrew from the pub-

'lick Meetings, and had private Assemblies of their own, *Iren.p. 115.* As he very well knows what the renowned *Hales* hath written, *p. 230, 231.* 'In times of manifest corruptions and persecutions, wherein Religious assembling is dangerous, private Meetings, howsoever besides 'publick Order, are not only lawful, but they are of Necessity and 'Duty — All pious Assemblies (in such times) are indeed, or rather 'alone the lawful Congregations; and publick Assemblies, though according to form of Law, are indeed nothing else but Riots and Conventicles, if they be stained with corruption and superstition. So he.

Sure the Doctor cannot think, as *Mr. Hobbs*, that any Assembly, forbidden by the Civil Sovereign to assemble, is an unlawful Assembly; that without his Authority a Church ought not to assemble.

2. Therefore the Doctor must be understood of forming Congregations under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the true Religion established allows —.

Now if this be the state of the case; 1. Those Congregations the Doctor aims at, are of the same Religion. I hope the Doctor is not got so high as to place Religion in those things wherein Parochial Congregations differ from them, to make the things necessary.

2. They doubt not but it is easy to prove, they have true Ministers; such Teachers as the Word of God, the certain Rule of Religion, allows.

3. And that they have divine Ordinances dispensed, and no other Worship of God than the Word of God allows. Yea, I see an able Lawyer, in his Advice to a Justice of Peace, *p. 5.* concluding, that it cannot be proved other Worship than the established Religion (or the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*) allows.

4. And may it not be a Question, whether they can properly be said to erect new Churches, or to proceed to the forming of separate Congregations, who were true Ministers, and had their Congregations before others came into their places? If they had done nothing worthy of ejection, or exclusion from their Ministry, whether they have not still a right to exercise their Function? And consequently, whether others may not as justly be said to draw away their People from them, as they are charged with the same Practice?

5. And whether if any Rules are established to bar such Ministers as God hath allowed, and tending to deprive multitudes of Christians of the benefit of his publick Worship, and Ordinances of his own appointment, whether such Rules can be strictly binding, or whether they are not an encroachment upon the Authority of God and Jesus Christ?

6. And let it be considered, whether if the poor Protestants now under the Power of *France*, who are deprived of their Temples, and places

places of publick Worship, should flee into *England* for the free exercise of their Religion here, whether I say, they should be obliged in all things to submit to the Established Rule and Order among us, or else be held guilty of a sinful and mischievous course of Separation, not to be tolerated and endured?

7. If Forreigners should be allowed a liberty of assembling for the Worship of God, without being strictly bound up to the present Rule established (in all things); or censured and taken for Separatists, why might not the sober, peaceable Christians among us be allowed the same liberty, without being laid under that charge and censure? Shall the *Church of England* think, that all her Charity and forbearance is owing to strangers; that she should show none to those, who are in some respect nearer to her?

8. Whether it will not be said the established Religion is the same now, it was in King *Edward* the sixth's days, when a Rubrick left it to the discretion of the Minister, what and how much to read, when there was a Sermon?

9. Whether there are not some publick places, that are not very well satisfied with what they have done, and come not up (in every punctilio) to the establish'd Rule? As some read not all the Common Prayer they are enjoyned; some use not the Surplice; Some omit the Cross in Baptism; some dare not put away any from the Sacrament meerly because they are not satisfied to receive it kneeling. Now are such to be accounted separate Congregations (in the Doctor's sence?) If it be said, Though they vary a little from the establish'd Rule, yet they keep to their *Parish-Churches*, and have Preachers Episcopally ordained, and publickly allowed.

Ans. 1. The Assembly, not the place, makes a Christian Congregation. And such Congregations were before Parishes were known in the world. The distribution into Parishes was only accidental, convenient but not of necessity. The Doctor says, (*Ser. p. 28.*) 'After sometime (but not till after some time) in the greater Cities they had distinct Places allotted, and Presbyters fixed among them; and such Allotments were called Titles at *Rome*, and *Lauræ* at *Alexandria*, and Parishes in other places. And how Common is it in *London* for men to go Ordinarily to other Churches and Ministers? Now will it be said, that such (leaving their own Parish-Church) make the Congregations with whom they joyn, Separate Congregations? Besides, there should be no difference here, if it might be as the Non-Conformist's would have it, they would be for preaching in Parish-Churches to chuse, if they might.

2. If the most of them were Ordained by Presbyters, yet that invalidates not their Ordination. *Iren.* p. 379. 'After Episcopal Government was settled in the Church, yet Ordination by Presbyters was looked on as valid. And p. 381. Bishop *Bancroft* himself (as is to be seen in *Spotswood*) would not have it called in question. An Acquaintance of mine being upbraided with it, that he was ordained by none but a company of Presbyters, quickly returned thus; You were ordained by a Bishop, I was Ordained by many Bishops together, and such Bishops as may be proved Scripture Bishops. But there are some ancient Men, yea, some that are younger too, who had Episcopal Ordination. And may it yet be said of these, that they are other Teachers, then the Established Religion allows?

3. If they are not allowed, that is the thing in question, whether Men have power to forbid them to preach, and exercise the office of the Ministry, who have been duly called, and set apart to it, and have not deserved degrading from it?

10. If Men have power to establish Rules; excluding from the Ministry thousands, not to be excluded by any Rules laid down in God's Word, whether the Church be not left in a Woful case, who by such means may be deprived of all, or the greatest and soundest part of her Ministers, and consequently of God, Ordinances at mens pleasure? When about 2000 Ministers are supposed to have been turned out together, what if all the Ministers in place had been of the same Judgment, not satisfied of the lawfulness of their submitting to the Established Rule, if thereupon they must all have laid down their Ministry, then how sad a state had Multitudes of Christian Congregations been left in, even as Sheep having no Shepherd? Can we think that *Christ* has left his Church at such miserable uncertainties, at such a loss, that she should have no Ministers, if Rulers say at one time, there shall be no Ministers but such as declare their assent and consent to such forms, and modes of Worship to another Book besides the *Bible*, and all things contained in it? and at another time, None shall be Ministers, but such as declare their assent and consent to the utter abolishing of all forms? If thousands of his Ministers shall be cut off with a Rule for Conformity on the one hand, and as many cut off with a Rule against it on the other hand?

5. Take notice here what the Doctor sayes else where, so he would have 'no penalty inflicted, till it may be seen whether they disobey 'out of wilful contempt and obstinacy of spirit, not only out of weakness of Conscience and Dissatisfaction concerning the things themselves. And if it be made evident to be out of contempt, yet that 'only

'only such penalties be inflicted as answer to the nature of the
 'offence, *Iren. p. 64.* And *p. 42.* As for the derivation of the power
 'and authority of the Function (of the Ministry) that is from Christ.
 'But for the Administration of the Function, two things belong to
 'the Magistrate: First, to provide and take care for due Administration
 'of it; and to see that Ministers preach the true Doctrine, though
 'he cannot lawfully forbid the true Doctrine to be taught; and that they
 'duly administer the Sacraments, though he cannot command them
 'to administer them otherwise then Christ hath delivered them down
 'to us. Secondly, in case of male-Administration of his Function,
 'or Scandal, rendring him unfit for it, it is in a Magistrate's power, if
 'not formally to depose, yet to deprive them of the liberty of ever
 'exercising their function within his Dominions. But I conceive,
 the Doctor will be hard put to it, to prove the ejected Ministers
 guilty of such male-Administration, or Scandal, for which the Magi-
 strate might justly deny them the liberty of exercising their Function
 within his Dominions. If it be within the Magistrate's power to
 forbid Ministers Preaching true Doctrine, and duly administering Sacra-
 ments, without any cause rendring them unfit, the consequence
 would be very sad, as was shewed before: if it be not within their
 power, then such may go on in the exercise of their Ministry not-
 withstanding Mens command to the contrary. And if such are not
 divested of their office, they have authority to exercise it still, as they
 shall have opportunity. As the Doctor (in his several Conferences,
p. 122.) tells us, He 'could not imagine that any Persons would
 'suppose the Christian Church would allow a validity of Orders,
 'without lawful Authority to use and exercise those Orders. And
p. 123. Can any Man be so senseless to think—(And *p. 132.*) 'the
 'Church never allowed one, but it allowed the other also? If you should
 reply, that the Doctor. (*p. 140.*) supposeth, it may be actually
 taken away by the censures of the Church. My Answer is, Yet I
 hope the Doctor will not say, that the Church hath an unlimited
 power here, that she may suspend, degrade, and depose whom she
 pleaseth; but that she must have just ground for proceeding to such
 a censure. He that before boundeth the Magistrates power (as we
 see before) would not have the Churches power left unbounded.
 If the Church hath power to censure, suspend, and depose the bad,
 for Scandal, Heresy, Idolatry, it will not follow, that she hath the like
 power to suspend and depose the good too (when she pleaseth)
 for non-compliance in things suspected, if not unlawful. This would
 be a power for Destruction, not for Edification. A power to Act

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against

against the Truth, not for the Truth: Such a Power as the Apostles would never claim, or exercise.

11. Then what if they be found such Teachers, and to worship God in such a way, as true Religion doth allow? What if an human Constitution established, allow not of those, who are allowed of by God in his Word?

12. Let it be considered, whether if true Ministers of Christ are cast out by such Rules as are not warranted by the Word they are not thereby necessitated to have distinct Congregations or to lay aside their Ministry, which may not be lawful for them to do? I would do the Doctor no wrong, but acknowledg, he distinguisheth betwixt Non-Communion in unlawful, or suspected Rites or Practices in a Church, and entring into distinct Societies for Worship. Now mark what he says, *Irenic. p. 123, 124.* 'This I do not assert to be therefore lawful, 'because some things are required which Mens Consciences are unsatisfied in: Unless (N. B.) others proceed to eject and cast them wholly 'out of Communion on that account, in which case their separation is 'necessary. — Here if I can understand the Doctor, he grants Separation necessary, entring into a new and distinct Society for God's Worship unavoidable, when Christians are wrongfully cast out for not conforming to a Church in unlawful or suspected Practices. And I can find nothing in his Conferences (*p. 170. or elsewhere*) to take off, or retract this Concession. From whence by a Parity of Reason, I think, it will follow, that when Ministers are wrongfully ejected, and cast out of their publick Ministerial Station for not conforming in unlawful or suspected Practices, their having distinct Assemblies becomes necessary, at least, if there be any need of their Ministry. And whether this be not the present case, I would leave it to indifferent, unprejudiced Minds to judg. When also the Canon *ipso facto* excommunicateth all Lay and Clergy who say they take Conformity to be Sin.

Now I proceed on with the Doctor.

P. 21. *But that I may do it more convincingly, I will not make the difference wider than it is.*

This I like well, as tending to Peace and Union. And it is his Advice to his Dissenting Brethren (*Serm. p. 56.*) *Not to inflame the Peoples heats, by making their differences with the Church of England to appear greater than they are.* Now I heartily wish, he may follow his own Rule. Surely, we agree in far more and greater matters, than we differ in. We are one with the Church of England in all the necessary points of Faith and Christian Practice. We are one with the Church of England, as to the substance, and all necessary parts of God's Worship.

ship. But we differ as to certain accidental Forms, and Modes, and Rites, which the Church of *England* cannot say are necessary, and appear to us as things at least to be suspected, and yet they are obtruded and imposed with as much rigor and strictness, as if they were most highly necessary.

P. 21. *They generally yield, that our Parochial Churches are true Churches.*

Ans. They cannot yeild that all Parish Churches are true Churches; or every Parish-Priest a true Minister. Are there none in place so lamentably ignorant, so wofully idle, so loose and grossly profane, that the Doctor would be ashamed to own, as Persons fit to be trusted with the dispensation of God's Holy Ordinances, and with the care of precious Souls? Now will the Doctor allow them to have private Assemblies in such places, under sound Teachers, where otherwise their Souls are in danger to perish for lack of knowledg?

Ibid. *They do not deny that we have all the Essentials of true Churches, true Doctrine, true Sacraments, and an implicate Covenant between Pastors and People.*

They will not grant so much of all Parish-Churches. Are there none in place unable to teach, that know not sound Doctrine? Are there none that teach corrupt Doctrine? If there be but one, or never so few blind Guides; if but one Heretick, Socinian, &c. or never so few of them; they are too many. But I doubt it may not be said, there are none such, no, not one. And are there none brought in quite against the Peoples consent? and is there yet an implicate Covenant betwixt such and the People?

2. It may so happen, that Churches which have all the Essentials of true Churches, may set down such terms of Communion, as some cannot submit to without Sin. In which case it may be no Sin, to separate from true Churches. Non-Communion is no Sin, where one cannot have Communion without Sin.

P. 22. *Who could have imagined otherwise than that — they should have joined with us in what themselves judged to be lawful, and in many cases a Duty?*

What they judg to be lawful, and in many cases a Duty, will not prove it a necessary Duty at all times, and out of those cases which make it so.

Ibid. *Scarce any of their Preachers — come ordinarily —*

If Preachers come not ordinarily to the publick Congregations to hear, supposing they have a warrantable Call to preach unto others; here is this to be said for it, which the Doctor hath, (p. 31.) *That which*

which may be a duty in one case, when it comes to thwart a greater Duty, may be none.

Ibid. And this is that which at present we lament, as a thing which unavoidably tends to our common ruine, if not in time prevented.

It seems if ruine comes upon us, those separate Congregations he speaks of, must have it laid at their Doors. But if we were convinced, that 'the Union of the Church lies more in the Unity of Faith and Affection, then in Uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremonies (as the Doctor hath the expression, *Irnic. p. 121, 122.*) and so could learn to exercise more Charity and mutual Forbearance towards each other, and no more bite and devour one another, both might be preserved in Peace, and our common ruine prevented. Whether the tolerating of Religious Assemblies, that differ not from the stated publick Congregations in any thing that is necessary to Salvation, or essential to a Christian Congregation, when both may be looked upon as Christian Assemblies, when God is truly worshipped in both, or the suppressing of them that differ only in some Mode of Worship, & Rites not necessary, tendeth more to the ruine of Religion, seemeth not hard for such as are unbiaſſed to determine. Hath nothing been done in those more private Assemblies to secure and promote the true Interest of Religion? Hath nothing been done there to prevent Peoples running into dangerous Errors? Might we not have had greater Flocks of Quakers, &c. had not many been stayed in those Assemblies? Have not Quakers, Anabaptists, &c. increased most, when these Assemblies have been most disturbed, when Men have been most zealous to disperse and suppress them? Hath nothing been done there to prevent the Growth of Popery? See the Morning Lectures against Popery. As the ejecting of so many sound Teachers, and thrusting them out of their Pulpits did; so no doubt the hunting them out of their Corners would very much please, gratify and encourage the common Enemy. If the Doctor thinks, it was better that none of that Worship was performed to God, and that Souls had none of those means and helps there, than that they should not have all just according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, this is a thing I would lament. On the other hand, it seems a little strange to me, how they do seriously lament our divisions, who are yet for keeping up the Wall of Partition betwixt them and us. What could we do in comparison of them? We cannot for our Lives submit to some things required. It should not be expected from us, unless they would have us lie and dissemble with God and Man: but if indeed they would have us one with them, they may plead hard, that no unnecessary burthen should be laid on us, which we cannot

not in conscience submit to, the strict imposition whereof is never likely to do any good, but must still keep up the unhappy differences among us. As the Con-Non and Non-Con sayes, I am well satisfied that the Church will never enjoy Catholick peace but upon Catholick terms, which the terms of Conformity are not.

Yet let not our Hearts be alienated from those with whom we must profess to agree in the main ; no, not though (through some strange prejudice) their Hearts seem hardned against us. Possibly, they might some time past have done much to take away the cause of our differences : but these differences must continue, and our common Enemy takes advantage at them ; as it ought not, so I hope it shall not prejudice our minds against our Religion, about which we differ not (the difference being but about certain unnecessary Additaments to it ;) And they that boast so much of their unity, have (we know) as great differences among themselves. As about that great point of the Churches Infallibility (the very Corner-stone in their Fabrick, which should hold all together) they are not yet agreed where to place it.

P. 23. *But you may ask, What then are the grounds of the present Separation : — That conscientious Men can in such a juncture of affairs persist in so obstinate and destructive a course of Separation ?*

Here are hard words indeed, that once I should not have thought would ever have dropt from the Doctor's mouth or pen. But *Tempora Mutantur* — How justly it is called Separation (in the bad sence of the word) and whether it deserves those Epithetes the Doctor hath bestowed on it in this Sermon, as sinful, Mischievous, Wilful, Obstinate, Destructive Separation, is to be considered. As the Doctor (in *Iren. p. 146.*) grants, there was a lesser, and an higher sort of, or greater Excommunication ; so methinks if he would needs have it Separation, yet there was no necessity for him to aggravate it, as if there was no difference betwixt a necessitated, and wilful, obstinate Separation. There may be a sinful Separation, that is not to be called wilful, obstinate Separation. Much less doth that which is necessitated, deserve to be so called. The Doctor hath told us, (*Iren. p. 103.*) that we must not ' Judg every thing to deserve the name, which is by ' many called Schism. That term being (as the Learned *Hales* sayes) ' but a Theological scar-crow, as it is commonly used. ' Schism then ' (sayes the Doctor) as it imports a Separation from Communion with a Church-Society, is not a thing intrinsically and formally evil ' in it self ; but it is capable of the differences of good and evil according to the grounds, reasons, ends, and Circumstances inducing

‘ to such a Separation. The withdrawing from Society is but the
 ‘ materiality of Schism; the formality of it must be fetched from the
 ‘ grounds on which it is built.

Now to the grounds on which these distinct Societies are built. 1. They are not the same with those on which the Separatists heretofore went. The Separatists held the publick Congregations to be *Babylonish Synagogues*. The Church of England was *Sodom* and *Egypt* to them, an Whorish and Idolatrous, no true Church. They held our Ministers to be Antichristian, both their Entrance into, and exercise of their function Antichristian. They held that set-forms of Prayer were Abominable in God’s sight. They held there was no truly constituted Church upon earth but themselves, and those that might be found of their way, (Wherein they were like the Donatists.) On such grounds as these they separated, which the present Non-conformists do not hold. Now if the formality of Schism, or Separation must be fetch’d from the grounds of it, then does not the Doctor forget himself (*Ser. p. 33.*) saying, *Do they not do the very same things, and in the same manner, that the others do? How comes it then to be Separation in some, and not in others?*

Thus in the negative, those distinct Assemblies the Doctor would batter down, are not built on the same grounds, that the proper Separatists stood on. Now,

2. I come to shew positively on what grounds I conceive they may stand. *Et quæ non profunt Singula, juncta, juvant.* And if any of them prove firm, So far what is built upon the same will stand good, whosoever calls it a Mischievous and Destructive piece of work.

1. The Teachers (I suppose) will say, as the Old Non-conformists (*Grave Confutat. p. 35.*) We desire to know by what warrant they can be accounted to be no Ministers now, that have given no just cause of Deprivation, since the time they were so Sufficiently called to the Ministry. They think, it is not in Mens power to degrade them from that office, without just cause. They have their office and Authority to Preach the Gospel from Christ, *Eph. 4. 11, 12.* They were not made Ministers *pro tempore*. And the Doctor hath not proved that I can see, that they have given Just cause of Deprivation. And then it would seem, they have Authority from Christ still to preach the Truth, which none upon earth can lawfully deprive them of. Fuller in his *Abel Redivivus*, tells us, that Bradford said, If God should deliver him out of Prison, He would Preach still, though secretly

cretly, as the times would permit him. And that *Bilney* after his Recantation, and repentance for it, Preached first privately in Houses, and then in the fields, till he was apprehended and taken to Prison. And so the Old Non-conformists when silenced by the Bishops, scrupled not Preaching in private Houses, or in another Diocess, where they could be admitted, as their practice shewed.

2. The Teachers think there is great need of their service and pains still in Ministerial work, as well as when they were in place. Sure, there is work enough for all the sober Conformists, and Non-conformists too. Indeed if they can find nothing else to do, then to fill the people with greater Prejudices against Communion with the publick Congregations (a thing laid to their charge. *p. 22.*) for ought I know, it would be as well; if they would for ever hold their peace, And so I hope the Doctor is mistaken as to that, having been Misinformed: or however, that there are not many such. But generally they are better employed. Sure I am, that many Nonconformists have indeavoured, and have been the means to keep many to the publick Congregations, and to keep up in them a due esteem of sober conformable Preachers, who otherwise in all likelihood had been quite turned off.

But if indeed they aim at the same end, the Glory of God in the Salvation of Souls, (which there is no Minister of Christ, that understands his work, and his faithful in it, but designeth, and desireth the promoting of) shall their Brethren quarrel with them for this? Or would the Apostle *Paul* have done it, who when some Preached Christ even of envy and strife, yet did, and would rejoyce however that Christ was Preached, *Phil. 1. 15, 16, 18.* But I hope, it cannot be thought of these without uncharitableness, but that they preach Christ of good will. And methinks, it had been better, if the Doctor, before he so severely Censured and Condemned their Practice, had staid to see all the Churches in *London*, &c. provided of such Ministers and of such store of them too, that there was no need for any to repair to their Old Ministers, and others like them, that they could stand for no more then Cyphers. But when all the Parish-Ministers, are not near Sufficient for so Populous a City, when such as deserve encouragement in their Places (as I am informed) have full Congregations, can the Doctor say in sober sadness, that it was better for all the rest to be untaught, then to be taught by such as do not conform? Are the souls of such multitudes of no more value, but that it

is fit to deprive them of the ordinary means of Salvation, unless they can have them, and will be content with them just in such a mode? And is it better that they should not worship God together at all, then that they should not do it just in such a way, as yet, would not make the Worship more acceptable unto God, nor more Profitable to themselves, while they could not attend on it without much dissatisfaction, and therefore probably not without more distraction should not the sense of their Duty (having been solemnly devoted, and set apart to the office and work of the Ministry) together with the necessity of souls, engage them to hold on in their Work; not in opposition to those in place, but as Fellow-servants, lending them the best assistance they can? How dare they do other, when they think of that account they have to make to their great Lord and Master, though Men be angry at them, though their Fellow-servants will not thank them for their pains?

3. As for those Non-conforming Teachers in *London*, who with their Assemblies (as I suppose) were especially in the Doctor's eye, and under censure here, it is not unworthy of consideration how loudly many of them were called on to their more stated Work, and solemn Meetings, by God's Thundring Judgments of Plague and Fire (as I remember Mr. *Baxter* takes notice, in his *Plea for Peace*) when many Conformable Preachers thought the service too hot for them, and left it. And how the Lord was pleased at that time to own, and Encourage them with his presence, and success in their Labours, I think should not, and hope will not be forgotten. Neither can I wonder, if many then wrought upon, fear to forsake the means which God did so signally own, and bless to their souls, lest a worse Plague should come unto them, lest the Lord should be provoked again to send Messengers of wrath to them for their so ill entertaining of those Messengers of Peace.

4. Further, as concerning the People that assemble with such Teachers, they may have such grounds as these. That there is an antecedent Obligation on Conscience to assemble together on the account of Christianity, whether humane Laws command, or prohibit it. (As the Doctor hath an Expression somewhat parallel to this, in *Power of Excom.* p. 12.) And that they are not so strictly confined to their own Parishes by the Law of God, but if they are not provided for at home, they may and ought to look out for their Souls abroad. That some Parish-Churches are not sufficient to contain all, nor half of the Parishioners, that all
cannot

cannot hear, if they would, and yet the Ecclesiastical Rules or Canons forbid their going to another Parish. That some Parish-Ministers are not to be owned as Ministers of Christ. There are some such blind Guides, as they that would go right, may justly fear to follow: Some like the false Prophets of old, that caused the People to err; their Doctrine so unsound, that it is dangerous for People to hear them. Some as if they were the Ministers of Satan, bend their Wits to pervert, and misapply the Holy Scriptures, and set themselves to strengthen the Hands of the Wicked, and to make the Hearts of the Righteous sad; that instead of perswading Men to follow after Holiness, rather preach it down. And some of the People are excommunicated by the Ecclesiastical Courts, and as they judge wrongfully, for such things as will not bear such a censure. And some again look upon themselves as excommunicated *ipso facto* by the Ecclesiastical Canons. And such being wrongfully cast out of Communion with the Parochial Congregations, by what the Doctor hath granted (*Irenic. p. 124.*) are necessitated to separate, and join with others that dare not deny them the priviledges which by the positive Laws of Christ are their right, thus unavoidably becomes their Duty. Again, divers judg it their Duty to cleave to their old Ministers. They are not satisfied, that that Act which turned them out of their Livings and Pulpits, did, or could quite null their Ministry, and immediately destroy the Relation betwixt them and their People. They were lawful Pastors before, and had done nothing that they know worthy of degrading and deprivation, and so for ought they know, they are rightfully still what they were before. Hence they make it a question, whether those ejected Pastors, or such as without any consent of theirs, and the People entred into their charge, be the Encroachers? And whether those that quite desert their old Ministers, or they that still adhere to them, do better? They doubt not but such are true Ministers of Christ still, such as he hath qualified, and called to the Office, and whose Ministry he hath owned, and blessed with success, and still doth. They dare not but own them as Ministers of Christ, and cannot but bewail it as a Sin of the Times, that they have been, and are so much disowned. They conclude, that if they are true Ministers still, it is their duty still to preach the Gospel, as they have opportunity, and consequently that it may be the duty of some to hear them. Again, one thing more, it may be some have met with that which the Doctor saith (*Iren. p. 109.*) upon the Question, 'Whether in a time when Churches are divided, it be a Christians duty to communicate with any of those Parties which divide the Church?' — A case not hard to be decided (says he) — By 'vertue

' vertue of his general Obligation to Communion, he is bound to ad-
 ' here to that Church which appears most to retain its Evangelical Pu-
 ' rity.—But supposing (them alike impure) either he hath joyned
 ' formerly with one of them, or (not)—If he be joined already with
 ' that Church, and sees no other but as impure as that, he is bound to
 ' declare against the impurity of the Church—Now they will think
 this Rule, or Advice of the Doctor's impracticable, that they should
 declare against the impurity of the Church, and so continue Commu-
 nion with it; for if they judg any of its impurity lying in the Book of
 Common-Prayer, the Church hath provided, that whosoever declares
 against it, shall be cut off immediately from her Communion. So *Canon*
 4. saith, Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the Form of God's
 Worship in the Church of *England*, established by Law, and contained
 in the Book of Common-Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, is
 a corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful Worship of God, or containeth
 any thing in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures, let him be excom-
 municated *ipso facto*. Thus such would be excommunicated forth-
 with by the Sentence of the Church in her Canons, without any need
 of further Sentence in her Courts: how then can a Man declare against
 the impurity of the Church, and yet hold Communion with her? And
 further they may think, it follows from the Doctor's own Words, that
 if a Man sees another Church not so impure, (and that comes nearer
 to the primitive Constitution, as *p. 110.*) he should chuse to join with
 that Church. But here it may be the Doctor would say (as *Confe-*
rences, p. 148.) ' There are many things in it [*his Irenicum*] which if
 ' Dr. *Stillingfleet* were to write now, he would not have said; for there
 ' are some things which shew his Youth, and want of due Considera-
 ' tion: others which he yeilded too far, &c. And I am content that
 this should not be admitted without due caution, and consideration,
 that it should have some limitations. But thus you have some of the
 grounds, whereon these distinct Assemblies stand, *Et valeant quantum*
valere debent.

And when the Doctor aggravates the Crime, that it should be thus
 [*in such a juncture of Affairs,*] methinks, it might have been expected
 of him, having such a zeal for the Churches Peace, and an happy U-
 nion, that he could be contented to be made a Sacrifice, if thereby he might
 close up the Breaches among us (as he says in *Epist. Dedic.*) I say, it might
 have been expected, that in such a juncture of Affairs when he preach-
 ed before the Parliament, he would put in some good Word, for the
 taking off those unnecessary Impositions, which are indeed the Apple
 of

of Contention, the main cause of our Divisions. And such a Motion (especially had it taken) might have procured him as great Renown as his *Irenicum*.

P. 23. When he says of the Protestant Religion, *I never expect to see it survive the destruction of the Church of England.*

I doubt not, his meaning is, that it would not survive here amongst us. But if by the Church of *England*, he meaneth the Church under the present Form, and established Rule (as his word is :) as if there could be no alteration of that, without the destruction of the Protestant Religion, I would only have these two things enquired into here, *viz.* Whether had we not the Protestant Religion in *England* sometime without, and before this established Rule (which was since his Majesty's Restoration?) many Years we were without any such Rule established. And whether the Protestant Religion hath not been preserved in other Countries, without having this same Rule established?

P. 24. The Doctor citeth Mr. *Baxter* there, and elsewhere, whereof I shall take little notice, concluding that he will answer for himself, unless it be judged that the Doctor is answered already in what is written, In *Sacrilegious Desertion, Plea for Peace, and Way to Concord.*

P. 25. *And what Ground can they have to separate and divide those Churches? —*

Perhaps they may be ready to retort here, Dr. *Manton's* Church, Mr. *Calamy's* Church, &c. before Aug. 24. 62. were true Churches, and what ground had others to separate and divide those Churches? Not such as are necessitated to withdraw, but they that force them to it, are the great Church-dividers.

P. 26. *It is possible, at first, there might be no more Christians in one City than could meet in one Assembly for Worship, &c.*

So particular Congregations seem first, *Ordine Naturæ Constituentis*; as Families before Cities, and Kingdomes. Yet I am not against a sub-ordination of Particular Congregations unto their Authority as regularly conjoynd, and exerting it self according to Scripture-Rule.

P. 27. *Why then should not Churches be reduced to particular Families, when by that means they may fully enjoy the Liberty of their Consciences, and avoid the Scandal of breaking the Laws?*

But

But their consciences tell them, that Family-Worship is not all the Worship God requires. And the Doctor himself has told them (*Iren. p. 109.*) Every Christian is under an obligation to joyn in Church-Society with others. And as touching the Scandal of breaking the Laws, that Able Lawyer before Praised (whosoever he was) tells them that the words of the Law cannot with reason and Charity be understood and construed, as intended against a real truly Christian exercise of Religion (*p. 3.*) His reason is, Because I suspect (sayes he) that such an Interpretation would make the Statute a Nullity (N. B.) in it self; for that all Casuists, Lawyers and Divines do agree, That every Law made against the Law of God, is null (*ipso facto*) as to any obligation of Conscience. And how harsh would it be (as he sayes) to make such a construction of the words, If any person or persons above the number four, shall worship God truly and sincerely in other manner, &c. shall incur the Penalty of the Act.

P. 27, 28. The Doctor would make the world believe, that it is past controversie, when the Apostles planted a Church, they put the same under the care and government of a Bishop and Presbyters: Whether he thought so when he wrote his *Irenicum*, let any man of reason read and judg. He had not then discovered any such distinction of officers, in the Jews Synagogues. And this he lays there 'as a foundation (*p. 239.*) that the Apostles in the forming of Churches did observe the customs of the Jews Synagogues. For he cites *Grotius, Totum Regimen Ecclesiarum Christi conformatum fuit ad Synagogarum Exemplar*, with others. And (*p. 252.*) 'All order is not power, nor power juridical, 'nor all juridical power a sole power, therefore it is a meer Paralogism 'in any from order to infer power, or from a Delegated power by consent, to infer a Juridical power by divine right; or lastly, from a power in 'common with others, to deduce a power excluding others. All which 'they are guilty of, who meerly from the name of an *Archisynagogus* 'would fetch a perpetual necessity of Jurisdiction in one above the Elders joyned with him, &c. And I cannot see that what is here said, did either shew his youth, or want of due Consideration. Methinks, it is very gravely spoken, not unbecoming a Doctor of the Chair. And see what he sayes, (*p. 276.*) 'As to the matter itself, I believe upon the strictest enquiry *Medina's* judgment will prove true, That *Jerome, Austin, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Theodoret, Theophylact,* 'were all of *Aerius* his Judgment as to the identity of both name and 'order of Bishops and Presbyters in the primitive Church, &c.

If I thought this would not suffice, you should have more

more. How few of his dissenting Brethren yet, with *Aerius* would separate from the Church, meerly upon this account, that it hath Bishops? An *Episcopus praeses* would generally be allowed of; though an Ecclesiastical order of Presbyters, that are not Bishops, is not found in Holy Scripture, (as Mr. Corbet. *Church-Unity*, p. 3.)

Pag. 29. If we look over the ancient Canons of the Church, we shall find two things very plain in them. 1. That the notion of a Church was the same with that of a Diocese; or such a number of Christians as were under the inspection of a Bishop.] I have not time to look over the ancient Canons now: but if we look over all the Books of the New Testament, we shall not find a Diocesan Church there. The Doctor could find no such thing in the Text, *Act. 20. 28. Take heed to yourselves* (spoken to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, v. 17.) and to the flock over which God hath made you overseers, *ἐπισκόπους*, Bishops: which the Doctor improves against our Congregational Men, (*Irenic. p. 349.*) But I cannot see how it makes for Diocesans, who are for one Bishop in a Diocese. They are for many Churches under the inspection of one Bishop; whereas this Text speaks of one Church under the inspection of many Bishops. I think no such thing will be made appear from the Government of the Jewish Synagogues, which the Doctor would have laid as a foundation. And speaking of the increase of the Churches power, he saith, (*Irenic. p. 374.*) Nothing can be more evident, than that it arose not from any divine institution, but only from Positive and Ecclesiastical Laws, &c. And as to Church-Government, we may find some Churches without Bishops for a long time, some but with one Bishop in a whole nation, many Cities without any, where Bishops were common; many Churches discontinue Bishops for a great while where they had been; no certain rule observed for modelling their Diocesses where they were still continued. Will not all these things make it seem very improbable that it should be an Apostolical Institution, that no Church should be without a Bishop.

2. P. 29. That those Presbyters who rejected the authority of their Bishop, or affected separate meetings, where no fault could be found with the doctrine of a Church, were condemned of Schism.] Now 1. The Doctor setting this down with approbation, must grant, when fault may be found with the Doctrine of a Church, separate Meetings are not to be condemned of Schism. 2. If he will allow of separate Meetings when the Doctrine of a Church is corrupted, by a parity of reason, he should allow them, if the Worship be corrupted: and then there may be some other account and reason to justify separate Meetings, besides that which the Doctor here takes notice of. Yet I

will not say, that any the least corruption in Worship, or Error in Doctrine is a ground for separation; though if our assent to the least error, or approbation of the least corruption be required, as a condition of having communion, that will warrant Separation. 3. Sometimes Bishops were set up against Bishops, and each party striving for their own, would not have communion with the other. This is that which *Cyprian* calls *Erigere Altare contra Altare*, as the Learned *Hales* says, (p. 222.) In which case it might happen, that neither part were free from the guilt of Schism. 4. The Doctor cannot say of his dissenting Brethren, that they affect separate Meetings; but indeed are driven to them. It is no joy to them to be in *statu separato*: but they do more desire, than hope to have dividing terms and impositions taken away. I could wish a due comprehension was offered them, to try whether they affect separate Meetings. 5. If the Doctor should look over the ancient Canons of the Church again, I very much question whether he can find such things imposed upon the Presbyters, as are now imposed, without submitting to which, they might not exercise their office.

P. 29. *So the Followers of Eustathius Sebastenus, who withdrew from the publick Congregations on pretence of greater sanctity and purity, in Paphlagonia, were condemned by the Council at Gangræ.]* Yet he tells us, *Irenic. p. 65. The Concilium Gangrense condemned Eustathius Sebastenus for making a necessity of diversity of habits, among Christians, for their profession; διὰ τὴν ἁγιότητα. A worthy pretence of sanctity and strictness. But indeed the Council had more to say to Eustathius and his Followers, than that which the Doctor takes notice of: As is to be seen in the Epistle prefix'd to the Acts of that Council (Carranza. p. 65, &c.) They condemned Marriages, and thereupon many Women left their own Husbands; and Husbands forsook their Wives, professing continence, which when they could not retain, they committed Adultery. Indeed they despised common Garments, and took up new and strange habits. Strange indeed, while the women went in mens Apparel: yea, they would cut their hair like men, and placed Religion in these things to boot. This and more is to be seen there. Their errors both in opinion and practice were very gross, which the Council takes notice of, and condemns.*

Ibid. So were those who separated from their Bishops, though otherwise never so orthodox, by the Council at Constantinople, and the Council at Carthage.] If I had time to search, I make no doubt but the cases of those condemned would be found vastly different from the

the case of the present Non-conformists, that are cast out for no crime they know of, and then condemned for affecting separation, when others have cast them out sore against their wills. The Doctor knows how long *Chrysostomes* Followers withdrew themselves from communion with the Bishops, and though he would not commend the act, yet he speaks small, and leaves it doubtful, *Irenic. p. 110.* But he was satisfied to clear *Jerome* there, who suspended communion with three Bishops for a time. But such a Council as thought *John Chrysostome* deserved to be deposed, would no doubt condemn the *Johannites*, his Followers, that would still flock after him. And if what *Socrates* relates of them be true, that they set the Church on fire, which ended not there, but also burnt down the Senators Court, such an action none can justifie. But blessed be God, our Dissenters cannot be justly charged with such turbulency; neither will they be found the men that set the Church on fire.

P. 29. If the Doctor will have the practice of Dissenters compared to the Novatian Schism (which he there mentioneth) Mr. Corbet hath obviated him, *Of Church-Unity, p. 42, 43.*

Ib. & p. 30. To that which he saith there, [*I do not remember one instance in Antiquity, wherein separating from Orthodox Bishops, and setting up Meetings without their authority, and against their consent, was acquitted from the sin of Schism.*] I would turn that of Mr. Baxter, (*Sacrilegious Desertion, p. 45.*) Prove you, if you can, that on August 24, 1662, they were degraded, or these true Churches dissolved on any reason, which any Churches for six hundred years after Christ would own.

I only add this, that admitting what the Doctor would have here, it will unavoidably follow, that it is possible the Church may suffer most under Orthodox Bishops. As if a Set of these should ever happen to take a distaste against preaching, and so injoyn only the reading of such Homilies as they thought fit in Churches, and take such order, that if any Minister preached, the Officers should pull him down; now if it would be the sin of Schism to set up other Meetings without their authority, and against their consent, might it not be better for the Church that they were Hereticks, and for imposing false Doctrine, whereby Ministers and People might be excused in their separation.

P. 30. The Doctor seems to allow of the separate Meetings of the *Joannites*, or Followers of *S. Chrysostom*, after his Banishment, and the coming in of *Arsacius*, they being unsatisfied in his choice: but this he thinks *far from justifying the willful separation of Presbyters*

and people from the communion of their Bishops, when they do agree in the same faith.] But the Doctor might have given it a softer term, than [willful separation.] *Arsacius* had governed the Church of Constantinople before *Chrysostom*, (as *Socrates* :) so the people had trial of both. They were not satisfied with the deposing of *Chrysostom*, or with the coming in of *Arsacius*. So are many unsatisfied with the putting out of their old Pastors, and with the manner of the coming in of their Successors. Might they see those Ministers restored to those publick places, the world should see then they were not for separate Meetings. *Aciores hoc seculo inter Ecclesie Doctores lites fuerunt, quam unquam ante* (as *Hottinger. secul. seu cap. 5. sect. 1. p. 238. 255, 256.*) There were sharper contentions among the Teachers of the Church in that age, than ever. *Jerome* writes against *Ruffinus*. *Epiphanius* grievously falls out with *Chrysostom*, because he would not condemn *Origen's* Works. *Jerome* and *Austin* had a great contest about the Apostle *Paul* reproving *Peter*. *Cyril*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, and *John* of *Antioch* deposing one another. And a Council deposed *Chrysostom*. Here was sad work indeed : when the Guides and Pastors of a Church divide, and go several ways, Schisms cannot be avoided ; but let them look to it, that are the causes thereof.

P. 30. 31. As to what follows there, I am of the Doctors mind, that we should not be for breaking all in pieces, if we cannot have all to our mind, and as we judge to be most agreeable to the Scripture-rule. But this makes nothing against those who could submit to a Form and Model of Government, they judge not agreeable to the primitive Plat-form ; provided they be not required to profess and declare contrary to what they believe, and to practise what they doubt of, which in them would certainly be a sin. And would not Dissenters generally bear with the practice of others (for peace-sake) might they be dispensed with, as to their own practice ? where it would be no sin for others to dispense with them, but it would be a sin for them to practise what they suspect to be unlawful. This the Doctor should have considered. And I would fain know, whether the like can be said of those Schismatics of old, who separated from their Orthodox Bishops.

Ibid. It is most certainly our duty to preserve peace and unity among Christians ; and it is impossible so to do, if men break all orders in pieces for the fancy they have taken up of a primitive Plat-form.] O that it was seriously thought on by those who are so ready to charge others with breach of Peace, Unity and Order, that it is their duty as well

well to do what in them lieth to promote the same. Then is it not their duty to do what they can to remove unnecessary dividing terms? Men may please themselves in talking for peace and unity; but how can we ever hope for peace in the Church, while unnecessary things, to say no more, that to many conscientious men seem unlawful, are enforced as if they were things highly necessary? Such Orders are the cause of our Disorders, and were better broken, and laid aside, than kept up.

P. 31. *It is a great fault among some who pretend great niceness in some positive duties, that they have so little regard to comparative duties: for that which may be a duty in one case, when it comes to thwart a greater duty, may be none.*] And suppose it a duty for Church-Governours in some cases to keep up their own Rules and Orders, yet may it not cease to be so when it comes to thwart a greater duty? And is it not a greater duty to see that God's Worship be kept up, than to keep up their own Orders? And if all the Conformable Ministers in London are not enough to instruct the people there, is it not a duty to suffer Non-conformists to preach, (who cannot, dare not conform) rather than because of their not conforming, to hinder so many, who might be getting good by them? If God will have mercy, and not sacrifice sometimes; should not those that profess to rule for God, be rather for no Service-Book, no Surplice, &c. than that many should have no publick Worship, no Preaching, none of God's Ordinances dispensed to them? Thus may not the Governors of the Church say, applying the Doctors words home to themselves: *Can we think that a duty lying upon us, which in our Circumstances makes a far greater duty impracticable?* Is it not more our duty, to take care, that the people may have sound doctrine taught, and the way of Salvation held forth to them, and that they worship God as he has commanded; than that we so stiffly stand for our own Ceremonies, with other things, that he has not commanded?

P. 31, 32. *Is there any thing Christ and his Apostles have charged more upon the consciences of all Christians, than studying to preserve peace and unity among Christians?*] If this be charged upon all Christians, then I hope, they are concerned in the charge, as well as others. And then how do they study to preserve the peace and unity of the Church, that lay the same on things unnecessary, and such, wherein it cannot be expected, that all good Christians should ever agree? *Opinionum diversitas & opinantium unitas non sunt ἀσύμβατα.* Without the strict imposing of such things (which men either have no power to impose, or however might safely let alone, and forbear to impose)

impose) we might sooner be at peace, and agreed.

Again, without doubt, it is no less a duty to endeavour to promote Faith and Holiness, than to study to preserve Peace and Unity. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. If peace cannot be had, without the loss of truth and purity, without offering violence unto, and defiling conscience, there is no remedy in this case, but we must be content to bid farewell to peace. But indeed that is the best and surest peace and unity, which is founded in the truth and purity of Religion. And I should never hope for an happy peace to be obtained by such a method and means, as have no tendency to Holiness, but would debauch the Consciences of many. As I should greatly wonder, supposing all the Non-conformists in *England* did now knock off from all Ministerial Work for peace-sake, if that peace could be blest, which would bring a curse with it to the souls of many, thus deprived of the ordinary means of grace and knowledge.

Pag. 32. When the Doctor says that [*For the sake of peace and unity we are commanded to practise meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, and submission to Governors.*] It mindeth me of a passage in Mr. Corbet, *Church-Unity*, p. 56. "The Conscientious that are willing to bid high for peace, (yet) cannot resign their Consciences to the wills of men; and humility and soberness doth not oblige them to act contrary to their own judgments out of reverence to their superiors; they cannot help themselves but their superiors may. With which take along that which the Doctor hath, (*Irenic.* p. 118.) *If it be said, that men are bound to be ruled by their Governors, in determining what things are lawful, and what not? To this it is answered, first, no true Protestant can swear blind obedience to Church-Governors in all things. It is the highest Usurpation to rob men of the liberty of their judgments, &c.* And see more to the purpose, p. 119.

Ibid. *As nothing tends more to unite mens hearts, than joyning in the same Prayers and Sacraments; so nothing doth more alienate mens affections, than withdrawing from each other into separate Congregations.* And therefore the Doctor did well to propound it from Mr. Hales (*Irenic.* p. 120.) *As a remedy to prevent Schism, to have all Liturgies and publick Forms of Service so framed, as that they admit not of particular and private fancies, but contain only such things in which all Christians do agree.* And till then as much mutual forbearance and charity as can be, should be shewed towards one another. And why might not the Congregations of Conformists, and those of Non-conformists bear with one another, as the Churches of the Jews, and

and those of the Gentiles were to do, that might happen to be distinct in the same City. As the Doctor says, *Irenic. p. 237.*) *I deny not but at the meeting of Paul and Peter at Jerusalem, when they observed how God did bless the one most in the Circumcision, the other in the Uncircumcision, there was an agreement between them for the one to lay out his pains chiefly upon the Jews, and the other upon the Gentiles; and in probability where they met in any City, the one gathered a Church of the Jews, and the other of the Gentiles.* And what a pity is it, that Conformists and Non-conformists, such as profess to aim at the same end as the propagating of the Gospel, the good of Souls, cannot agree, that the work may be carried on to the best advantage, so as to gain the more? They that have their hearts alienated from their Brethren, that jump not with them in all things, I suspect are more zealous for setting up a party, than for promoting the true Interest of Christianity. I would love and honour sober, serious Conformists, as I doubt not there are many such, whose Religion lies not all in an outward form, and Ceremonies. And though I be no Congregational Man, yet though I know many of them could not be satisfied to joyn with such as I am, I would not that my heart and affections should be alienated from them, who I believe do many of them sincerely serve God in their way. And I think they do better, than such as would hinder them from serving God at all, unless in a way that is contrary to their Judgment; or such as would yield to mens will against their own judgments here.

P. 32. *Which tempts some to spiritual pride, and scorn and contempt of others.*] Of which so far as any of us are guilty, I wish we may see our sin, and be ashamed. To pity and pray for others, whom we may think out of the way in some things, were a great deal fitter for Christians, than to scorn and condemn them. And if we fear there is too much formality in many, have we not cause to reflect on our selves? How slighty dead and formal are we often in holy duties? If we suspect some corrupt mixtures in publick Worship, have we not cause to look home, and to be humbled? Is there no mixture at all of pride, hypocrisie, or worldly distracting thoughts, with our Religious Services?

P. 33. — *And provokes others to lay open the follies, and indiscretions, and immoralities of those who pretend to so much purity and spirituality above their Brethren.*] As for those who pretend to so much purity and spirituality above others, and yet are guilty of plain immoralities, for me let them be laid open. I have nothing to plead for them. But I should have so much charity for the Doctor, that
he

he would be very tender, how he laid open the weakneses of others, to expose Religion it self to scorn. As he says (Answer to several Treatises, p. 6.) *Have I made the practice of true devotion ridiculous, and the real expressions of piety, the subject of scorn and derision?* I wish those that have been guilty this way, could see their error and recant.

P. 33.—*For they say that causeless renouncing communion with true Churches is Schism, especially if it be joyned with setting up Anti-churches unwarrantably against them*] For this Mr. Baxter is cited (*Way of Concord, part. 3. ch. 1. sect. 40. p. 13.*) And it is a wonder how the Doctor could over-look what follows (in the same Page, sect. 43. *The greatest and commonest Schism is by dividing Laws and Canons, which causelessly silence Ministers, scatter Flocks, and decree the unjust Excommunication of Christians, and deny communion to those that yield not to sinful, or unnecessary ill-made terms of Communion, &c.* This was spoken of before. They say, some, after breaking and robbing an House, or the like, the better to make their escape, have cried out as loudly as any, Turn the Thief, turn the Thief. The Papists cry out against us as Schismaticks, when they are the Schismaticks themselves..

Ibid. *This is not dealing with us with that fairness and ingenuity which our former Brethren used; for they avow the fact of separation, but deny it to be sinful; these owning it to be sinful have no other refuge left but to deny the fact, which is evident to all persons.*]

The Doctor had been newly before mustering his Forces against those of the Congregational Way; I am glad to see them part so fairly, that after all he can call them Brethren. Here now he is charging those of the Presbyterian Perswasion, or so reputed. And he chargeth them home, that they deal not with that fairness and ingenuity as others. And yet I question not, but he had newly before the penning of this Sermon, read Mr. Corbet; for he takes notice of his late Piece) whom consult (*Of Church-Unity, p. 30, &c.*) It is no Schism, as he says, but a Duty not to adhere to an unity of external order so set and urged, as that it tends to the destruction or notable detriment of Faith and Holiness, which are the end of all Church-Order. The means are good in reference to their end, and must never be used in a way destructive to it. So he: and does not Reason and Religion both say the same? (And p. 33. 34.) “ There is a great difference between inimical Separation, like Sedition in a Common-wealth, and Segregation upon necessary causes without breach of Charity. — The scope here-

of is not to set up Churches against Churches, but either occasional and temporary Assemblies, or at the most, but divers Churches distinguished by their several places of Assembling, or by diversity of external order, as the allowed Congregations of Foreigners in *London*, are distinguished from the Parish Churches. Now may not others say, that the Doctor dealeth not here with the fairness and ingenuity, which might have been expected, to take no notice hereof?

But methinks, this is a marvellous strange thing, that they should be represented as not fair and ingenuous, for not being ingenuous. Is this a fault in them, that they are unwilling to make their differences with the Church of *England* appear greater than they are? A fault which the Doctor himself afterwards (p. 56.) adviseth them to take heed of. And it is good advice. So methinks he should forgive them this wrong. Or is this a fault in them, that they are at no farther distance from the Church of *England*? I hope the Doctor cannot think so. Is it not an argument of their tenderness, candor and ingenuity, that they so readily acknowledge what is good even in those they differ from, that they are for narrowing the difference all they can? This the Doctor would have.

P. 33. But says he, the fact of Separation is evident to all. *For do they not do the same things, and in the same manner that the others do? How comes it then to be separation in some and not in others?*] Shall I tell you how it comes about? Why, thus; because what they do is not upon the Separatists Principles. And therefore indeed it is not in the same manner. A meer local separation cannot prove them guilty of a sinful separation. The Doctor cannot but say, that one Parish-Meeting is locally separated from another. Nor will it be proved by their meeting in private houses, and more obscure places, when they can have no other. For so did some Parish-Ministers after the dreadful Fire in *London*, 1666: whom yet I know the Doctor would acquit from the sin of Separation. But he tells us a little before, "*They preach when and where it is forbidden by Law.*"] Then it seems the Doctor holds, that the Law must determine what is Schism and sinful Separation, and what is not. And then methinks it follows, that if they were not forbidden by Law, their practice would be lawful, not a sinful separation. Now what a good and charitable Law would that be, that would immediately deliver so many honest, well-meaning men from the guilt of sinful separation? And here what the Lawyer says, runs in my mind, *scil.* [*If the worship in it self be evil, it is intollerable in four; if good, fourscore cannot make it evil.*] H But

But the Doctor adds, "*They worship God, and administer Sacraments by other Rules, and after a different manner than what our Church requires.*"] Now to this I would say, either (as the Lawyer, who in some things speaks also like a Divine) their Worship is not to be accounted after a different manner: as our Saviour taught his Disciples to pray, *Matth. 6. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye, &c.* And so we must think, their Prayers; *Act 4. 24. &c.* were according to the Lords Prayer, agreeing for matter, though they used not the very words. Did the Disciples of Christ pray in any other manner than according to the Lords Prayer? is his question upon it, p. 5. Or else I would say, their worshipping God, though after a different manner from that which the Church of *England* requires, will not necessarily prove them guilty of Separation. They may worship God according to Scripture-Rule, and after that manner which God allows in his word, though not just after the manner of the Church of *England*. Or else lastly, it must be said, that Foreigners coming to live amongst us, should be counted Separatists, a French Church, or a Dutch Church Separatists, if they did not worship God, and administer Sacraments just after the mode of the Church of *England*: and so likewise some Parochial Congregations must be in part guilty of the sin of Separation, not coming up fully to those Rules, and that mode of Worship which the Church of *England* hath enjoyed.

P. 33. *They are very unwilling to confess a Separation, because they have formerly condemned it with great severity; and yet they do the same things for which they charged others, as guilty of a sinful Separation.*] Here the Doctor seems a little uncharitable in his censure. They cannot see, nor hath the Doctor proved, that what they do is the same with what they condemned. It is their grief, that they are driven to any course, which may at all look like separation. But who drive them to it? They dare not decline their duty for fear of mens taking offence, and counting it separation. The Learned and Renowned *Hales (Of Schism, oct. p. 230.)* grants Religious Assembling besides publick Order, in some cases, not only lawful, but of necessity and duty. And there is not a little to be said for it in the present case. And suppose another Order and Government settled by Authority, and those things enjoined, which would bear as hard on their party, as these do upon Dissenters, I would have better thoughts of some of them, than to imagine, that they would thereupon wholly lay down their Ministry, that whatever need there was of th. m, they would not keep up any Assemblies for God's Worship.

Worship; because the times did not allow it. If they were in the like circumstances, ejected by authority for Conformity, as others for Nonconformity, if they would look upon it as sinful separation, for them to act any more as Ministers, I am much mistaken in many of them.

P. 33, 34. *For the Assembly of Divines urged their dissenting Brethren to comply with their Rules of Church-Government, and charged them with Schism if they did it not; whereas they only desired to enjoy such liberty as to their separate Congregations, as is now pleaded for by our dissenting Brethren.*] Those Papers for Accommodation, Printed 1648, which the Doctor referreth unto, I have not, neither know I how, or where to procure them suddenly. But I have this to say :

1. I suppose his dissenting Brethren think, there is more Scripture-Warrant for the Rules of Church-Government offered by that Assembly, than can be shewn for the establish'd Rule now. And it was very strange, if they who proposed them thought not so; seeing they were generally Conformists before (very few of them excepted.) Other Churches, with whom they had correspondence, took them not for Knaves, nor Fools. And what the Doctor thought once of such a Rule of Government as is established, may be seen, (*Irenic. p. 414, 415.*) *The Episcopal Men will hardly find any evidence in Scripture, or the practice of the Apostles, for Churches consisting of many fixed Congregations for Worship, under the charge of one person, &c.*—Then all such things must be retrieved which were unquestionably of the primitive practice, but have been grown out of use through the length and corruption of times. Such are the restoring of the Presbyteries of the several Churches, as the Senate to the Bishop—The contracting of Diocesses into such a compass as may be fitted for the personal inspection of the Bishop—The constant preaching of the Bishop—The Solemnity of Ordinations, with the consent of the People—The employing of none in judging Church matters, but the Clergy. These are things unquestionably of the primitive practice, and no argument can be drawn from the present state of things, why they are not as much, if not more necessary than ever. And therefore all who appeal to the practice of the primitive Church, must condemn themselves, if they justify the neglect of them.

2. Let us suppose that Assembly too rigid in their principles, that cannot justify or excuse others who go beyond them. 3. Whatever was disputed in those times, no such rigour was then practised. I should think, the Doctor can scarce forget this, that many of our Pulpits were open both for Episcopal and Congregational Men,

to preach with us. And how many Episcopal Men that in those days held their Livings still? And some well known to be so, who had the hands of Presbyterians to help them into Livings. And how many of these, who would have judged it a lamentable thing, had such a Rule been set up in force, that people must have been untaught, and as Sheep without a Shepherd, rather than have such as were of the Episcopal, or Congregational Perswasion to be their Guides? The *Worcestershire* Agreement, and *Cumberland* and *Westmerland* Agreement with others, and some that were never Printed, may bear witness how willing they were to have the assistance of their Brethren (though of a differing perswasion as to Church-Government, &c.) in that work, for which all their Forces united were too little.

P. 34. *They thought no person was to be indulged as to any error or scruple of Conscience; but with this proviso, that in all other parts of Worship they joyn with the Congregation wherein they live.*] Then will the Doctor plead for them so far, that they may have a Dispensation, or Indulgence, as to what they scruple? Many scruple imposed Forms of Prayer, (suppose it to be their weakness, and an error, yet they really scruple, and doubt the lawfulness thereof.) And more scruple the Common Prayer, as not altogether sound. And some think, their presence would be an approbation of the Corruptions in it, unless they may have liberty to testify against those Corruptions. Which if they do, the Canon pronounceth them excommunicated, *ipso facto*. Will the Doctor get that taken off? Many scruple the procuring of God-fathers, and God-mothers, as Sponsors for their Children in Baptism, and the addition of the Cross to Baptism (which to them looks like a Sacrament of mens coining.) Many scruple kneeling in the receiving of the Lord's Supper (apprehending a Table-gesture most fuitable to that Ordinance, and supposing that the Disciples used such a gesture, whom they would not pretend to excel in their Devotion.) It would ease many, might they be considered as to these Scruples.

Again some think, they have enough against the Minister of the place where they live. It may be, he is very vicious, and wofully debauched. It may be, he is continually flying out against true Sanctity and Piety, as Fanaticism, and foolish preciseness, or as meer hypocrisie. It may be, if they should come to him with their Doubts and Scruples, desirous to be resolved and satisfied, he could say nothing to them, or would but deride and discourage them. And how can they be satisfied to commit the care of their Souls to one, they know, has no care of them.

Again,

Again, must the people needs joyn in the Congregation where they live, when there are many Parishes so large, as the Churches could not possibly contain all that belong to them, no, not by thousands? Should they meet together, yet the Worship to the far greater part of them would be no better than Latine Service.

And if people are no way tollerably provided for in the Parishes where they live, and yet they must rest content, must we not suppose that those things which have been pleaded for so much as lawful, and indifferent, are indeed the necessary things, and sound Preaching the ordinary means of Salvation, with the Salvation of Souls, are but indifferent things? so it should be necessary to keep to the Rules of the Church, but not necessary to learn how to walk by Scripture-Rule. Necessary to go to our Parish-Church; but not necessary to learn the way to Heaven. So it should be indifferent, whether Souls attain to sound knowledge and faith, indifferent whether they be converted and saved. While they keep to order here, it matters not what becomes of them hereafter.

—P. 35. *And that if they can hold occasional communion without sin, they know no reason why it may not be ordinary without sin too, and then separation would be needless. To which they subjoyn these remarkable words, which I heartily wish our Brethren at this day would think seriously upon, to separate from those Churches ordinarily and visibly with whom occasionally you may joyn without sin, seemeth to be a most unjust separation.*]

Ans. 1. Many Non-conformists have ordinarily joyned with them in the Parochial Congregations, where they have had opportunity; though withal they have had other occasional Meetings: our blessed Saviour and his Apostles went to the Jews Synagogues, yet would not be absolutely confined to them; but had other Assemblies besides.

2. Where such are put in the place of Ministers, and publick Teachers, who evidently want the necessary qualifications required in Ministers and Pastors of Churches by the positive Laws of Christ, they may be in doubt, whether they should do well to own and encourage such. Here they may think, they cannot hold ordinary communion without sin, and then withdrawing from such is not needless, and unjust separation. If the Church has power to set such over Congregations, and to oblige others to hear them, then the Church has power with blind and perfidious Guides to send Souls to Hell. Such as would *edificare ad gehennam*, are not true edifying Preachers. It were to be wished, that such as are a great reproach to the Ministry, through

through their ignorance and profaneness, &c. and for all their zeal for Uniformity, yet indeed cause divisions and offences, who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly, were removed. Are they not as Salt without its savour? may not such be found more guilty as to the matter of Separation, than those that withdraw from them?

3. As hath been noted before, they must necessarily divide into distinct Assemblies, where there are tolerable and profitable Preachers, if yet it be impossible for all the people to joyn with them in the Worship of God. And then what reason there is to call such necessary distinct Assemblies Anti-churches, for some little diversity of order, I see not: unless a French Church, or a Dutch Church among us must be so accounted. Some difference may be supposed to have been in the Churches planted by the Apostles, yet all agreeing in the main, and what was necessary, they were not to judge or despise one another. Would so many Ministers of the Gospel have been set aside, as Supernumeraries, upon account of not agreeing with others in some unnecessary disputable points, when yet the Church had real need of them? So

4. Though I have not those Papers, to consult, the Doctor so much insists upon; yet I cast my eye upon what some about that time, who were very likely to know the others sense, wrote: And all this you do (say they) voluntarily, not separated, but separating (*non fugati sed fugitivi*) Now we know who are excommunicated *ipso facto* by the Canons (and so separated) and unwarrantably (say they) not having any sufficient cause. But whether they have no more cause and warrant now, than those had whom they charged with separation, is the question. And Z.C. who pleaded the Doctors Cause so zealously before him, grants, separation that is not voluntary, but whereunto men are constrained, and separation upon warrantable ground or reason, (the inevitable Contraction of Guilt, or cessation of Christ's True Worship, and Non-communication with particular Assemblies, to which we never stood related, and with which we cannot orderly and ordinarily communicate) is not Schism, but passionately and unjustly so reputed.

P. 35. *And I must needs say, I never saw any Cause more weakly defended, no, not that of Polygamy and Anabaptism, &c.*]

Then it seems there is as much to be said for a man's having more Wives than one, as hath been, or is like to be pleaded for worshipping God truly, for the preaching and hearing of his Holy Word, that is not according to the manner and order of the Church of England.

gland. Then the ordinary means of Salvation are not to be accounted of in any other way. Then Ministers that are not satisfied to conform, had better suffer multitudes of Souls to perish, than preach the Gospel to them, which is called the Power of God unto Salvation. This is strange Doctrine to me. Methinks, the Doctor over-looks his Brethren, and what they have said for such distinct, or (as he calls them) separate Meetings. Think well of those four Cases Mr. Corbet puts (p. 30, 31.) wherein they would seem necessary. And so far as I am able to judge, he doth as clearly take off the objection some are ready to make, (p. 32, 33.) If it be said, we may not do evil that good may come, nor break the Laws of unity for such respects ; The Answer is, that this is not to do evil, but a good Work, and a necessary duty, and here is no breach of Unity that is of God's making or allowing. The necessary means of saving Souls are incomparably more precious than Uniformity in external, accidental order, especially when 'tis unwarrantably enjoined, and attended with such evil Consequents. If so much may be said for Polygamy, that it is good and necessary, and no breach of Gods Law, I am quite out in my aim.

P. 36. *For although they allow our Churches to be true, and that it is lawful to communicate with them, which is the most plausible plea they have, this is so far from extenuating, that it doth aggravate the fault.*] Then it seems, the Donatists were more excusable, for that they confined the Church to their own party, and would not acknowledge other Churches to be true Churches. But the Doctor once condemned the monopolizing of Churches to Parties. (*Preface to Irenic. p. 5.*) *From this monopolizing of Churches to parties hath proceeded that strange uncharitableness towards all who come not up to every circumstance of their way and method.* Now doth this aggravate their fault, that they do not what he there condemns? Then he liked not, that men should account only that the Church, where their own method of Government is observed, *ibid.* But now it seems, Parochial Churches that follow the establish'd Rule, are the only Churches in England, that those who come not up to every circumstance of their way and method, are false Churches, Anti-churches. *Ab initio autem non fuit sic.*

P. 36. *But whatever may be said as to other pleas—— My Text seems to afford the strongest of all, viz. that men are to be pressed to go no farther than they have already attained, and not to be strained up to an Uniformity beyond the dictates of their Consciences, &c.*] So Mr. Hales, that man of Note and Renown, thought (*Of Schism, p. 215, 216.*)
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218.) So the Reverend Doctor thought, (*Prefac. to Iren. p. 8, 9.*)

P. 37. *Men are bound in conscience to go as far as they can.*] And how far they would have gone, for peace-sake, and to enjoy their publick liberty, methinks the Doctor should not forget. (*See Petition for peace, p. 9. sect. 10.*) And suppose, that through weakness, they could go no further; yet Mr. *Hales* (in the place last referred to) hath this remarkable passage, which I heartily wish at this day was seriously thought on, that to yield a little to the imbecillities of Inferiors is a thing which *S. Paul* would never have refused to do. Is there no obligation upon the governing part in such a case, to do what in them lieth for preservation of the Churches Peace; that now we hear not a word of that from the Doctor: but rather the contrary, (*Answer to several Treatises, p. 268.*) — *In such matters required by a lawful authority (such as that of our Church is) there is an advantage on the side of authority, against a scrupulous conscience, which ought to over-rule the practice of such who are the Members of that Church.* But nineteen years since, he would have the world know, that Christians were once known---by their mutual love, forbearance, and condescension towards one another: (*Preface to Irenic. p. 6.*) *That condescension, a stooping to the weakness and infirmities of others, is the indispensable duty, and a characteristical note of those that have more than the name of Christians,* (*ib. p. 7.*) *That Christ's design was to ease men of their burdens, and not to lay on more, &c.* (*ib. & p. 8.*) Why are such things now kept up as a mighty secret, which if taught, applied, and practised, would so very much tend to the Churches Peace; which I will not say he pretends, but seriously professes to be zealous for.

P. 37. His sharp censure in the words following, [*And I cannot see how it is consistent with the tenderness of Conscience which our Brethren pretend to, &c.*] I pass it over.

Ib. I dare say, if most of the Preachers at this day in the separate Meetings were soberly asked their judgments, whether it were lawful for the people to joyn with us in the publick Assemblies, they would not deny it, and yet the people that frequent them generally judge otherwise. — But why then is this kept up as such a mighty secret in the Breasts of their Teachers, why do they not preach it to them in their Congregations?

Answ. 1. So I suppose they would not deny it to be lawful to joyn with a Dutch Church, or a French Church. I would not deny it to be lawful to joyn with the Lutheran Churches, supposing one call among them. And if he could joyn with no other, for any thing I know, it would be his duty.

2. The people I have most conversed with generally judge otherwise than the Doctor says. They think it lawful to joyn with Conformists, and Non-conformists both, and accordingly they practise.

3. I know not that this hath been kept as a mighty secret. I have Preached, and you know what I have written for the lawfulness of it. And so have other Non-conformists preached too.

P. 38. *It is lest they should seem to condemn themselves, while they preach against Separation in a separate Congregation.*]

Ans. They look upon Churches, or Congregations under the establish'd Rule, as parts of the true visible Church, and so do they look upon the Congregations they preach unto. When Licenses were granted, some sober Conformists came to the Lectures of Non-conformists, who yet were far from principles of Separation, and could preach still against Separation, without being self-condemned. And so may Non-conformists preach against principles of Separation in their distinct Assemblies, and not be self-condemned. Again, it seems, in the Doctor's Judgment, none that own their Churches to be true Churches, should preach to such as are for Separation: but if they do, they are self-condemned. Now methinks (though I know divers of them would be very shy, and backward to hear us) it is a pity that such should be quite exposed, and suffered to run into greater and more dangerous errors still, as they are laid open, if no sound Teachers must preach to them. I think, it can never be proved, that all causeless separation is a fundamental error, and inconsistent with a state of Salvation, that by the very act such evidence themselves to have a form of Godliness, but deny the power thereof (as one, and a good man (I believe) in his zeal was ready to assert) I find the Doctor more moderate than so, (*Answer to several Treatises*, p. 183.) where he says, *Nothing of this nature can be objected against our Church by Dissenters, that excludes none from a possibility of salvation meerly because not in her Communion.* And many of the ancient pious Catholicks had other thoughts of some of the Novatians. And yet suppose the error of causeless separation was of a more desperate consequence, than the Doctor hath affirmed there, I see not, but such as are taken with it, have more need of the means to recover them out of it. And if it be their duty to hear God's Word, methinks it should not be a Ministers sin to preach to them. If hundreds of them (hearing the report of the Doctor's Sermon) out of curiosity would go to hear him, I know not what authority he hath to bid them depart,

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be gone. I am sure the Apostles would not have scrupled Preaching to a company of Idolaters, who were as bad as these can be supposed to be.

But I hope the generality of those that frequent those more private Meetings, now called separate Congregations, are not Separatists truly so called, but of more sober principles. And many of them such as thirst after God's Word and Ordinances, and perhaps many of them neglected; and wrongfully barred by others. And why it should be made questionable, whether Ministers may not lawfully preach to such? is a thing that in following times may be a little wondred at.

P. 38. (*For I know not how it comes to pass, that the most godly people among them, can the least endure to be told of their Faults.*) I should have thought, this Parenthesis might have been spared. It sounds very harsh. If the most godly among them be such, then one would be apt to conclude, there can be very little godliness among them. I would hope yet, it was not the Doctor's design here to gratifie those that love to gird at the godly. Too many such there are that would have hummed the Doctor for such an expression as this. Though I am more taken with that of Bishop Reynolds, (*Means and Method of Healing, p. 19.*) *They who hurt them, hew at the Bough whereon they stand, dig under the foundation which holds them up.* But I wonder how the Doctor came to know this of them. If he had it only by the report of others, is that a sufficient ground for such a positive charge and accusation? Or hath he had to deal with them himself? Here I must say, that of all I ever had to deal with, I could generally observe the contrary. And those that are the most forward to censure others, and willing to overlook their own faults, and unwilling to hear of them, we cannot take for the most godly among us; for there are others that give far better and greater evidence of their godliness.

P. 38, 39. *If the bare dissatisfaction of Mens Consciences do justifie the lawfulness of Separation, and breaking an established Rule, it were to little purpose to make any rule at all.*]

Ans^r. 1. Though the bare dissatisfaction of mens Consciences justifie not separation, supposing Conscience erroneous, yet separation in case of dissatisfaction may be a less sin, than the imposing of those things about which mens consciences are dissatisfied; or then joyning in communion against the Dictates of their Consciences. Would the Doctor have them joyn in the Liturgy, &c. against their Consciences? Surely, that would not be like honest and conscientious

tious men. (*Ser. p. 43.*) *No man that hath any Conscience will speak against the power of it.*

2. To make Rules about things unnecessary, and suspected (to say no more) which it is known the Consciences of many scruple, and are dissatisfied at, would indeed seem to be to very little purpose, (*cui bono?*) if not to ill purpose. Christ and his Apostles left the Church no such Rule. And can any Church now mend the Rule they left? Are not all Churches bound to walk by that same Rule? Whatever Rule men set down, can oblige only so far as it contains nothing repugnant to the Rule of the Word. Those whom the Doctor probably thinks he pinches here, have the same thoughts which he had once; (*Preface to Irenic. p. 9. And p. 415.*) *That Form of Government is the best—* (And so by a parity of Reason, that Order and Rule about God's Worship) *which comes nearest to Apostolical Practice, and tends most to the advancing the peace and unity of the Church of God.* And thus what is necessary in genere, (by the light of Nature, and Rule of Scripture) being prudently determined in specie; it would seem best, as tending most to advance the peace and unity of the Church of God, that what Christ and his Apostles left at liberty, should be left so still. As Bishop Reynolds (*Author and Subject of Healing, p. 34, 35.*) *Shew all possible tenderness and indulgence towards the infirmities, especially the Consciences of men of humble and sober, of quiet and peaceable Spirits. The strong are taught to bear the infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15. 1. Be careful to secure and settle the Fundamentals, the Vitals and Essentials of Doctrine, Worship and Duty, that you may be sure of sound and orthodox Ministers to go in and out before the Flock; and if in smaller and more problematical things, men cannot be all of one mind (as we never shall have perfection of judgment till we come to Heaven:) Let not the strong despise the weak; nor the weak judge the strong: whom God receives into his favour, let not us shut out of ours, Rom. 14. 3. And again the same worthy person, (Means and Method of Healing, p. 41.)* — *There ought to be all tenderness to preserve for God's people the liberty wherewith the Lord hath made them free. God forbid any restraint or abridgement should be upon that.* Thus he. Now how many would be satisfied with a Rule, not exceeding such right measures as God's Word is clearly for. And see *Petition for Peace, p. 20.* Where also the objection, that some would still be unsatisfied, is cut off.

P. 39. The Doctor returns again to the Assembly, and what passed betwixt the Presbyterians and the Congregational Men. *Though*

tenderneſs of Conſcience may juſtify Non-communication in the thing ſcrupled, yet it can never juſtify Separation.]

Now as I would not ſay that Conſcience, if erroneous, juſtifieth Non-communication, but only excuſeth *à tanto*; ſo though an erroneous Conſcience cannot juſtify ſeparation; yet it may in part, and ſomewhat excuſe it. As they that are not ſatisfied to joyn with the publick Congregations, ſuppoſing them in an error here, yet (though then it muſt be ſuppoſed an error for them to ſet up ſeparate Meetings, notwithstanding) I ſhould think, they are more to be excuſed, in that they keep up God's Worſhip in their proper Meetings, then if becauſe they could not joyn with the publick Worſhip, therefore they would wholly neglect to worſhip him. Even thoſe Meetings, that may be very diſorderly, as to ſeveral circumſtances, may yet be looked upon as Religious Meetings. And I durſt not ſay, that profane Ale-Houſe Meetings are more allowable and commendable than they, as ſome of our young Clergymen (if I have not been miſinformed) have publickly determined of all private Meetings for the worſhip of God.

2. There ſeems to be a difference betwixt that ſeparation which they diſallowed, and the preſent practice, which the Doctor will have to be ſeparation, as appears, I think, by what hath been ſaid. And had thoſe diſſenting Brethren been cauſeleſly put out of their places, I know not but that there was need of their Miniſtry, and that they ought to have employed themſelves therein, as they had opportunity; though men had called it ſeparation. On the other hand, could the Doctor procure this favour for his diſſenting Brethren, that they may be taken into publick places, where they may be diſcharging their office unto which God hath called them, he ſhall have no more occaſion offered by them (I believe) of preaching againſt their ſetting up ſeparate Congregations. Yea, though the terms were much harder, than any put upon the former diſſenting Brethren. They look upon the preſent Aſſemblies (very probably) but as temporary Aſſemblies, upon a preſent exigence, their Office, and the neceſſity of Souls calling on them to follow the work of their Miniſtry. They would not chuſe a ſeparate ſtate. Some of them have moved, and generally would deſire to be taken into communion with the Churches under the eſtabliſhed Rule, upon terms conſiſtent enough with neceſſary and due order in the Church.

P. 40. That it is endleſs to hope to give ſatisfaction to erring Conſciences.)

But

But the Doctor hath not yet evinced (that I can find) that his dissenting Brethren are kept off from complying with the established Rule by an erring Conscience.

It yet remains a controverted point, on which side the error is. The Doctor says (*Several Conferences*, p. 165.) *We think the requiring doubtful things for certain, false for true, new for old, absurd for reasonable, are ground enough for us not to embrace the communion of a Church, unless it may be had on better terms than these. And—We have often proved, that imposing of unreasonable conditions of Communion, makes the Church so imposing guilty of the Schism.*]

And some cannot be sure yet, that none of this is now imposed. And it is possible some may think, that if it can be proved an unreasonable condition that Ministers must declare Assent and Consent to a Book in Folio, and to all things contained in it, upon Aug. 24. 1662. before many of them could possibly have a sight of it, and before others that had it, could diligently peruse it: then the Doctor here lays the guilt of Schism on the Church.

Again, the Doctor says, (*Answer to several Treatises*, p. 178.) *He must think me a very easie man to yield, till I be satisfied first that God hath appointed such to be my Guides. And he grants (p. 265.) Men may have reason to question, if not the skill, yet the sincerity of their Guides, and though they must have some, may seek new ones. And hereupon some may think, it is an error, to hold, men must not leave their Parish-Church, though a blind, or unfaithful Guide be set there. As the Doctor farther says, (ibid.) The ignorant follow their Guides only upon the opinion of their skill and integrity; and when they see reason to question these, they know of (N.B.) no obligation to follow their conduct over rocks and precipices.*

Again, the Doctor grants, an absolute submission cannot be due to the Guides of the Church (that would suppose them to be infallible.) So far we are agreed then, that men are not bound to submit to them in all things they may require. As he says (*Irenic*, p. 119.) *If that be not usurpation and dominion over others faith in them, and the worst of implicit faith in others, it is hard to define what either of them is. Now to go on a little farther with him there: If they be bound to obey only in lawful things; I then inquire who must be judge what things are lawful in this case, what not? If the Governors still, then the power will be absolute again; for to be sure, whatever they command, they will say is lawful, &c.*

But: (says he, *Answer to several Treatises*, p. 179, 180.) *The great difficulty now is, so to state these things, as to shew that we had reason*

son not to submit to the Guides of the Roman Church, and that those of the separation have no reason not to submit to the Guides of our Church.—Let the things in dispute be proved to have been the practice of the Christian Church in all ages, we are ready to submit to them. Now may not Dissenters say the same? When (p. 181.) he sends that noble challenge, *We challenge those that separate from us to produce one person for fifteen hundred years together, that held Forms of Prayer to be unlawful, or the Ceremonies which are used in our Churches.* Granting him that Forms of Prayer are lawful, and have been very anciently used in the Church; yet some will be as ready to challenge him (perhaps) to shew (if he can) out of all his reading (which must be acknowledged very great) that the Forms of Prayer now enjoined are of fifteen hundred years standing in the Church. That the *primo*-primitive Church had a *stated* Liturgy, after the example of the Jewish Synagogues, I suppose he cannot prove. That Pastors had liberty of composing Forms in after-times for their own Congregations, I suppose he will not deny. That Forms of Prayer were imposed upon Ministers (and that with an Assent and Consent required to all and every part) that this hath been the practice of the Church in all ages, is so evidently untrue, that no man of common ingenuity, (much less such a worthy person as the Doctor is) would assert. Let us go to the Scripture, the primitive, and Reformed Churches, (three Judges the Doctor would send us to in doubtful cases) and we shall hardly find any of them determining for such a practice.

Again, the Doctor hath these words, (*Answer to several Treatises*, p. 282.) *The Primitive and Apostolical Church? That we have always appealed to, and offered to be tryed by. The truly Catholick Church of all Ages? That we utterly deny to have agreed in any one thing against the Church of England.* Now let it be proved, that the Primitive and Apostolical Church was for the Re-ordination of Ministers ordained by lawful Presbyters, and that this has been the practice of the Christian Church in all Ages (when there hath been occasion offered) let this be proved I say, and (as the Doctor says before) we are ready to submit.

As for the Ceremonies used, and strictly enjoined, the Doctor formerly distinguished betwixt Ceremonies properly taken for Actions significative, and matters of orders and decency (*Irenic.* p. 68.) yet now I see he would have them confounded, (*Answer to several Treatises*, p. 268.) where the second thing he supposes the authority of Church-Governors to lie in, is, *Making Rules and Canons about matters*

matters of order and decency in the Church. Not meerly (says he) in the necessary circumstances of time and place, and such things the contrary to which imply a natural indecency; but in continuing and establishing those ancient Rites of the Christian Church, which were practised in the early (he does not say first) times of Christianity, and are in themselves of an indifferent nature. Here he would make them both one. Yet how it can be, I do not understand. Prudent Rules, that all things in the worship of God be done decently, and in order, are not indifferent, but something more; but rules establishing significant Ceremonies (which the Doctor would hook in here under the terms of order and decency) its feared, are not indifferent, but something worse. Though the Doctor is pleased to call them trifling Objections that are brought against them; I could never yet meet with satisfactory Answers to them. I wonder how S. Austin and the Doctor parted: for they were very great. (*Irenic. p. 68, 69.*) That *Sine ulla dubitatione refecanda existimo*, foundeth like an heavy sentence against such Rites and Ceremonies, which the Doctor seems now for having continued and established; which sentence with the reason of it he would then have referred to the most impartial judgment of every true sober-minded Christian. I have not yet seen the Doctor clear it, that the Ceremonies used in our Churches are contained in the Holy Scriptures, or determined by a lawful general Council, or Councils, or confirmed by the custom or practice of the Catholick Church. I know not of any one, that hath proved crossing in Baptism the practice of the Christian Church in all Ages, the same I may say of the rest.

The Doctor further saith, (*Answ. to several Treatises, p. 180, 181.*) Then we are no Separatists: see the second Plea for Peace, ch. 12. *All things are lawful which are no way forbidden expressely, or by consequence. Those who separate from the Church of England make this their Fundamental Principle as to worship, (wherein the difference lieth) that nothing is lawful in the Worship of God, but what he hath expressely commanded; we say all things are lawful which are not forbidden, &c.*]

This seems not to be the sense of all that separate, that nothing is lawful, but what there is an expresse command for in Scripture. How many are there that hold the baptizing of Infants lawful, though it be not expressely commanded? An expresse Text of Scripture they think not necessary here. And the Non-conformists (who now begin to be ranked with Separatists) would be satisfied, could they see any general warrant in Scripture, authorizing Church-Governors to add to that engaging Sign of Baptism of Christ's

Christ's Institution, another dedicating sign of mens inventing, and other significant Ceremonies besides what the Lord hath appointed. Such general warrant they cannot yet find. And see *Q. Elizabeth's Injunctions, sect. 3. That the works devised by mens fantasies besides Scripture* — have not only no promise of reward in Scripture, but contrariwise, &c. And Bishop Bilson (*Christian subject. part. 4. p. 345.*) — If we alter that which he hath appointed for himself, or add any thing unto it, he rejecteth all our service, as done not unto him, but to the conceit of our hearts, which by nature is no God.

And if such Ceremonies be not forbidden (in any sense) and therefore lawful, it will follow, that the Governors of the Church have authority, after those three, to bring in three score more, yea, three hundred, if they please, which are no more forbidden. *We say* (says the Doctor) *all things are lawful which are not forbidden.*

And (*ibid.*) *We defend the Government of the Church by Bishops to be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.*] Here possibly you will again be put in mind of that (*Irenic. p. 414.*) *The Episcopal Men will hardly find any evidence in Scripture, or the practice of the Apostles for, &c.* — which hath been so universally received in all Ages since the Apostles times.] Yet not universally. As here probably you will think of what was cited before (*Irenic. p. 374.*) — *We may find some Churches without Bishops for a long time, &c.* And see the practice of the Reformed Churches, which part they generally embraced, (*Iren p. 408.*)

Again, the Doctor saith (*Answer to several Treatises, p. 182.*) *The Guides of our Church never challenged any infallibility to themselves* — *It is to no purpose to propose terms of Accommodation between those who contend for a Reformation, and such who contend that they can never be deceived, &c.*]

But here some may think, that though Church-Guides pretend not to Infallibility, yet (as it has been so) it is like to be to very little purpose, to propose terms of accommodation unto those that are not for any condescension, but stand upon their own authority. And when some are really dissatisfied at, and cannot but scruple some things injoyed, and yet can hear nothing but [You are factious, and schismatical, and proud, as if you must instruct your Governors, whose duty it is to obey them, and to follow your Guides.] Such may carry, as if they would not allow men to think them fallible. Little hopes of peace and union in the Church, while such things are so rigidly insisted on. Which (as *Con-non and Non-con* says (*In Introduction, p. 5.*) Rigid Conformists confess to be but trifles comparatively,

paratively, the Church might be without them, and yet do well; and moderate Conformists confess them to be burdensome, and the Church might be, and do better without them, or if they were left to each mans choice and will. If (as he says) it is in itself a great and dreadful sin to silence the Non-conformists, and do by them as hath been for these many years, and yet no thoughts of Reformation, or condescension can be entertained, it is much at one, as if they challenged Infallibility. The Church of *Rome* requires submission upon the pretence of her Infallibility, others require it (where men cannot be satisfied it is lawful) upon account of their Authority. So it is little relief or satisfaction to doubting minds, to tell them (as *Answer, &c.* p. 268.) That the Authority of the Church (in such matters) *hath been not only asserted in the Articles of our Church (which will not challenge Infallibility, but acknowledgeth she may err) but strenuously defended against the trifling objections of her Enemies, from Scripture, Antiquity and Reason. And I freely grant (though such have no reason to thank him for what he grants here, for he gives them nothing) not only that such an authority is in itself reasonable and just; but—in short, the authority of the Church should over-rule scrupulous Consciences.* So the Church (if she pleaseth) may satisfy scrupulous Consciences, (that doubt of the lawfulness of the present Ceremonies) with injoyning thrice as many more of those ancient Rites of the Church, so we may have an anointing with Oil; so we may have Milk and Honey after Baptism; so we may have crossing, not only once at Baptism, but in fashion upon all occasions, as in *Tertullian's* time. And if the Church should thus pay them home for their scrupulosity, the Doctor may still say, *It is in itself reasonable and just.* But is this [doing as much as in them lies, to reclaim Dissenters?] As he says (p. 289.) *It is very well known, that we do endeavour, as much as lies in us, to reclaim Dissenters; but God never wrought miracles to cure incorrigible persons—* And does he now account such incorrigible? And without any distinction? Then I could wish some would mind him of that expression he hath, (*Preface to Irenic.* p. 2.) *And yet that hath been the aggravation of our divisions, that those whose duty it is to lift up their voices like Trumpets, have sounded rather an allarm to our contentious spirits, than a Parley or Retreat, which had been far more suitable to our Messengers of Peace.*

Further the Doctor says (*Ans. &c.* p. 183. speaking of those who dissent) *None of them charge our Church with any error in doctrine. I cannot say so. I suppose the Church of England owneth the preface to the*

Book of Ordination, &c. which says, [It is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scriptures, and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these orders in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as several Offices.] And the Doctor says a little before, *We defend the Government of the Church by Bishops to be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.* But here some may say, Doctor St. did diligently read Holy Scriptures and ancient Authors before he wrote his *Irenicum*; yet no such thing was evident to him, that from the Apostles time there were those three several Offices in Christ's Church: Therefore it is not evident to all diligently reading the Holy Scripture, &c. Or thus, The Apostles Government was conformed to that of the Jewish Synagogues: (as the Doctor lays that for a Foundation) but the Jewish Synagogues had no such Government. *Ergo* that cannot be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.

To what follows in the same page, it may be said, If the Church of *England* excludes none from a possibility of Salvation meerly because not in her Communion, why does she not set aside things not necessary to Salvation to take Dissenters into her Communion, rather than urge them so as may be prejudicial to their Salvation.

Again, the Doctor saith (*Answ. &c. p. 184.*) *Ours challenge no more than teaching mento do what Christ had commanded them, and in other things, not commanded or forbidden, to give rules, which on the account of the general commands of Scripture, they look on the members of our Church as obliged to observe. So that the authority challenged in the Roman Church encroacheth on the Prerogative of Christ, being of the same nature with his, but that which our Governors plead for, is only that which belongs to them as Governors over a Christian Society.*]

1. Governors have authority to give special Rules about order and decency in God's Worship, upon that general command, *Let all things be done decently, and in order.* So much Dissenters readily grant. Only they think, that such as pretend not to an immediate authority of obliging mens Consciences, should not stand as strictly upon their own orders, though according to general Rules of Scripture, as on the observation of the plain and positive commands of God.

2. That the Governors of a Church have authority to give Rules for the observing of Religious Ceremonies in God's Worship, which he has not commanded; needs further proof, than the Doctor hath offered (that I can see.) Such are not meer matters of order and decency. Distinguishing betwixt parts, and circumstances of
Worship

Worship here (as *Conferences, &c.* p. 101.) will scarce salve the matter. To instance in the Sign of the Cross, hath the Church power to appoint any other dedicating Sign, besides what Christ hath instituted? If so, then (it seems) she may appoint not meerly what is subservient unto, but what is of the same nature too with what Christ hath instituted, without encroaching on his Prerogative. And if the Sign of the Cross be an allowable circumstance, because not expressly forbidden, may not the same be said of a Load of Ceremonies, if the Church please to bring them into God's Worship?

3. Is it no encroaching on the Prerogative of Christ, no intrenching on his authority, to make new Laws, and Rules for Communion, and for the exercise of the Ministerial Function, which Christ hath not made, or allowed in his word? Or does it indeed belong to Governors of Churches to eject Ministers, and Christians out of communion for such things, for which by the Rules of Christianity men should not despise or judge one another?

Further the Doctor says (*Answer, &c.* p. 185.) *Whether our Churches imposing of three Ceremonies declared to be indifferent by those who require them, can be thought by any men of common sense so great a burthen to their Consciences, as all the load of superstitious fopperies in the Roman Church, &c. which particulars make the difference so apparent between the separation of our Church from the Church of Rome, and that of Dissenters from our Church, that it seems a very strange thing to me, that this should be objected by our Enemies on either side.*

Now it is easily granted, that the Church of Rome hath given far greater cause for separating from her, than the Church of England can hitherto be charged with; yet it will not therefore follow, that none can separate from her, but it must be a causeless separation, unless her impositions were equal to those of the Roman Church.

And upon the same grounds, that those three Ceremonies are imposed (*scil.* that all things are lawful which are not forbidden, and because the Church has authority of continuing and establishing those ancient Rites used in the Church) she may bring in a whole load of Ceremonies, and among the rest many of those Fopperies used in the Roman Church, which are no more forbidden in Scripture, than the three pitched upon, and therefore must be concluded lawful.

Again, the Church declaring the things to be indifferent, it seems a very strange thing to me, that they should still be imposed, when they are found of so evil consequence, which one would think, might alter the nature of their indifferency.

And further, though I like not comparing the Church of *England* to the Church of *Rome*, I would not call them Idolaters; neither do I think, they do well, that call all Dissenters Schismatics. Some possibly may plead that which the Doctor saith (*Conferences*, p. 158.) — *A Christian is bound to joyn with other Christians in the Acts of God's publick Worship: but withal he adds immediately, that he is bound to chuse the communion of the purest Church. — Where there are distinct communions, the best is to be chosen. And (Answer, &c. p. 177.) A man who would satisfy himself in this divided state of the Christian Church, what particular communion he ought to embrace, and what Guides he must follow, — he must not only exercise his own judgment in particular controversies, but must proceed according to it, and joyn with that Church which upon enquiry he judges to be the best.*

Now to return from this Digression: we see, it may be a question, whether the error be in the Dissenters, or no? And then, though it be endless to hope to give satisfaction to erring Consciences; yet I hope it will not follow, that therefore men should not seek to give satisfaction to those, that for ought they know, are not in an error, that desire no more than it is: but just and reasonable, they should be satisfied in. And yet further, because there is no hope of satisfying all erring consciences, are none therefore to be considered? no, not so far, as by forbearing to impose indifferent things upon them, when they (through error and misapprehension) take them to be unlawful? Then there can be no such thing as condescension and Christian forbearance shewn to any the most tender consciences. But the Doctor cannot say, that those with whom he there compares Notes, did look upon the Rules they proposed, as but concerning things indifferent, or that they would not satisfy others in such things as were but indifferent to them.

P. 40. *They conceive the causes of separation must be shewn to be such as ex natura rei will bear it out.*]

And so Dissenters think still. And that there is a just and warrantable ground for those distinct Assemblies some of them are employed in, where they hope they are doing God and his Church some service, which they dare not decline; though they would be more glad, if it would please him to open a door for them, to be employed in the more publick Congregations, in hope that so they might be more serviceable. The causes of their present practice have been shewn before.

Ib: *And did not the Apostles bind the burden of some necessary things on the Churches, &c.*]

This

This hath been taken notice of before, which pleads nothing for mens imposing things unnecessary, which they say are but indifferent, and others think unlawful. As the Doctor hath told us formerly, the Apostles valued not indifferencies at all. Their Rules of Uniformity were about things necessary. And should the Church now value two or three Ceremonies, with other things not necessary, above many hundred preaching Ministers, and those many thousands of Souls that have need of them, and might have been getting good by them?

P. 41. *That the Apostle by this Rule in the Text, did not intend to allow Brethren, who agree in all Substantials of Faith and Worship, to separate from one another, in those very Substantials wherein they agree.*]

Nor did the Apostle intend to allow others to set up such Rules as would not suffer sound Teachers agreeing in all Substantials of Faith and Worship, to hold publick communion with their Flocks, to whom they had been lawfully called, and such as would bring in many less likely to care for the Flocks. If they that agree in all Substantials of Faith and Worship, should not separate from one another, let us pray, that there may be such an accommodation, that Conformists and Non-conformists may freely joyn one with another, as those that walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things in the main, as those that serve one Lord and Master, and carry on the same design, that notwithstanding some difference in lesser matters, they may heartily accord, and concur in what may be for the promoting of true Religion, the Worship and Honour of God, and the salvation of mens souls. And that they may love and honour those most, not who are most zealous for their own party, and exactly of their own opinion, but who are the best Christians; and most zealous for the common interest of Christianity.

P. 41. *That there is a great deal of difference between Tyranny over Mens Consciences, and Rules of Uniformity.*]

Yet some Rules of Uniformity may be Instruments of Tyranny, and Engines of Cruelty. As for that pretty *Simile* of stretching a low man to the same length with a taller, or cutting a tall man to the stature of one that is low, for Uniformity's sake; see the Doctor making use of it, *preface to Iren. p. 10. lb. That they do not desire Uniformity for the sake of Tyranny, but only for order, and order for edification.*] So the Doctor must not plead for those (if there be any such, as God knows whether there are) that are for Uniformity, as a means of cutting off, casting and keeping out many conscientious men, that they conclude cannot be satisfied to conform, whose

whose exclusion they desire, and are glad of. This looks like Uniformity for the sake of Tyranny. And if the present Uniformity and order be for edification, it would seem, that those three Ceremonies, declared to be indifferent, with those other things that have cast and kept out so many hundred Ministers almost these eighteen years, are more for peoples edification, than all their pains would have been.

What follows there, the Doctor hath spoken enough unto (*prefac. to Irenic. p. 10.*) pleading that men should not be denied the liberty of their Consciences in such matters of practice. And (*p. 11.*) he hoped the same of the Church of *England*, that in conformity to the primitive Church, so much would be allowed us.

P. 42. From whence we see the Church of Englands indeavour after Uniformity, is acquitted from Tyranny over the Consciences of men by the judgment of the most learned of the Assembly of Divines.]

But hold a litle. The matter must be stretched out upon *Procrustes* Bed, before both these meet. That Assembly was for Uniformity, therefore for the present Uniformity, which requires a great deal more, and quite other things, than they proposed: this will by no means follow: unless the Church of *Romes* indeavouring after Uniformity in their way be acquitted by the Church of *Englands* indeavouring Uniformity. Now I am sorry to see the Doctor ready to impose upon us too.

Ibid. A willful error or mistake of Conscience doth by no means excuse from sin.]

To this I readily assent: as the Doctor proves it well from *Act. 26. 9.* *I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.* And *John 16. 2.* *They shall put you out of the Synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.* But as the Doctor says, it was a horrible mistake. And some may think it questionable, whether God will take it as a good piece of service done to him, that which hath been done among us to so many of his Servants.

P. 44. If the error be wholly involuntary, i. e. if it be caused by invincible ignorance, or after using the best means for due information of his Conscience, though the act may be a fault in it self, yet it shall not be imputed to him as a sin.]

Now here is the most comfortable word I can find in all the Sermon for many of his poor dissenting Brethren. Here is wounding and healing from the same hand: a good Weapon-Salve. After some hard words and censures, he speaks a comfortable word here

to such as after using the best means for due information of their Consciences, that is, laying aside prejudice, and passion, and interest, examining things fairly on both sides by the Laws of God, the Rule of Conscience, praying for divine direction, &c. yet after all cannot be satisfied, that the things imposed are lawful for them to submit unto, or that it is lawful for them wholly to lay aside their Ministry thereupon; though their not conforming, or their preaching still (notwithstanding they do not conform) may be a fault in it self (supposing them in an error here) yet it shall not be imputed to them as a sin. Though men may condemn them for it, God will not. He cannot say [in this case] that such are willful and damnable sins. And if God will pardon such, methinks men should, who have as great need of forgiveness themselves. And as *Con-non* says, He that over-censureth, may be more guilty than the error he censureth. To what the Doctor lays down there, and p. 45. I would subjoyn what follows, (out of *The Plea for Peace*, p. 235.) Some of us are able to say that we have with a willingness to see the truth, studied the case of the old Conformity above forty years, and the case of the new Conformity now above seventeen years, and read almost all that hath been written for them, which we thought might add to our information, and prayed earnestly that God would not suffer us to err, and the longer we study it, the more we are confirmed: In this case we suffer publick and private obloquy and reproach: — And in reason, its as easie to think, that they that hold their opinion on such terms, are like to be as impartial in their studies, as they whose way leadeth to preferment, wealth and honour; of which we were capable of a part. — And they that say, God will not condemn men for that which they were not able to avoid or help, should not do otherwise themselves.

P. 45. *While we keep to one Rule, all people know what it is to be of our Church* —]

But why should none be thought of the Church, but those that in every thing conform to such a Rule? Shall the defect of a Ceremony dismember the Church? A little before the Doctor, *Let us study the Unity and Peace of the Church.* And would there be ever the less peace and unity in a Church, if a diversity were allowed as to practices supposed indifferent? yea, there would be so much more as there was a mutual forbearance and condescension, as to such things, (Preface to Irenic. p. 9, 10.) P. 45. *If men set up their own fancies above the Rule, they charge it with imperfection; if they do not obey the Rule, they make themselves*

selves wiser than those that made it.] Though men should not set up their own fancies, I hope they may be allowed to set up the Holy Scriptures above any other Rule, and to try other Rules thereby, Church-Rules are not infallible. The nine and thirty Articles grant so much. We must not suppose men to be as wise as God. Whatsoever corruptions at any times may be introduced, if any boggle at them, the like may be objected, that such make themselves wiser than their Rulers. Must not men be allowed a private judgment of discretion? Would the Doctor have them led by an implicit Faith to a blind obedience? Here it was worth the while viewing over again, *Irenic.* p. 118, 119.

P. 46. — *Such the wisdom, and order, and piety of its Devotions, that none who are true Friends to any of these, can be Enemies to it.*] Like that (*Conferences*, p. 100.) *The best Church in Christendom.* Yet I suppose, not so good as to need no reforming.

Ibid. — *If themselves were in place, or those they love and esteem, then the Government is a good thing, if it be in good mens hands. Thus do mens judgments vary, as their interests do.*]

Does he think so of all? Might not some Non-conformists have got as high a place in the Church, as he is in, and perhaps a step higher, had they been satisfied to conform? But the Doctor's advice there is good: *Let us take heed we do not give too much occasion to our Enemies to think the worse of our Church for our sakes.* Such a Friend I am to the Church, and to Episcopacy, I heartily wish, it may take with all concerned. And the better they are, the better it may be for us all. Some have queried, whether a people might do better under good Laws and bad Judges, or under but indifferent Laws and good Judges? They that take on them to guide and govern Souls, are under the greatest obligations to be good. An eminent Lawyer, when he was put to his choice, what course he would follow, chose to apply himself to the study of the Law, saying, *If I should be a bad Physician, I might destroy many mens Bodies; should I be a bad Minister, I might ruine mens Souls; but if I should prove a bad Lawyer, I shall only prejudice men in their Estates.*

P. 46. *We find Uniformity and Order condemned as Tyrannical, till men come into power themselves* —] Herewith compare that in the last Page of the Preface to *Irenic.* *Nay, I dare not harbour so low apprehensions of persons injoying so great dignity and honour in the Church, that they will in any wise be unwilling of themselves to reduce the form of Church-Government amongst us to its primitive state and order, by retrenching all exorbitances of power, &c.*

Ibid. & 47. *Those who now plead for Toleration, did once think it the Mother of Confusion, the Nurse of Atheism, the inlet of Popery, the common sink of all Errors and Heresies.*]

And men may still have such thoughts of an unlimited Toleration. And if the Doctor and some other of his Brethren were soberly asked, whether it were not lawful for Rulers to Tolerate such in the Church, as his Dissenting Brethren, and allow them to Preach publicly, that hold no more dangerous Errors, and carry peaceably, they would scarce deny it. I think the Doctor cannot, seeing what he says (*Answers to several Treatises, p. 282.*) *The Primitive and Apostolical Church? That we have alwayes appealed to, and offered to be tried by.* And may not his Dissenting Brethren Appeal to, and offer to be tried by the Primitive Apostolical Church, whether ever she suspended, and ejected Ministers (agreeing with her in the Substantials of Faith and Worship) for such things? And yet one would think by the course that hath been taken with them these eighteen years, or very near, Rulers were otherwise perswaded, and have not been minded of it. Now to use some of the Doctors own words. (*Ser. p. 37, 38.*) Why is this kept up as such a mighty Secret in their Breasts? Why have they not Preached it to Rulers? Is it for fear? — But is it not plainly written, *If I yet please men I shall not be the Servant of Christ?* Or should we not be uncharitable if we supposed that worthy men who upon all occasions profess such zeal for Peace and Unity in the Church, do yet prefer some petty private Interest before such a publick good? If therefore they would acquit themselves like honest and conscientious men, let them tell Rulers plainly that they look on it as very lawful to Tolerate such, and allow them Liberty of Preaching publicly, such as the Primitive and Apostolical Church would have allowed; and we may have some hope, that if Rulers are made sufficiently sensible, that such a thing is Lawfull, they may in time judge it to be a Duty, all things considered. And this might do more towards the calling back of those separate meetings the Doctor is so offended at, then all that he hath said here in his Sermon. It must be granted, All persons and things are not to be tolerated. Yet methinks, such may be tolerated, who indeed ought to be encouraged.

P. 48. — *Cutting off all Rules of Order and Decency, as incroachments on the Institutions of Christ.*]

Rules of Order and Decency are allowed. There is a general Rule in Scripture for them. But there is no such general War-

rant for men to appoint Religious mystical Rites and Ceremonies in the worship of God. That these seem to be encroachments. Gods Worship may be as orderly and as decently performed without them; therefore they pertain not to Order and Decency. And if Rules of Order cannot be binding, when contrary to the end for which they are to be appointed, that is, Edification, much less are Rites and Ceremonies of mens devising, that have less to be said for them; when they really obstruct that end.

Example. The Doctor would have us distinguish between approbation of the use, and of the choice of things. But whether Assent, with Consent imply not a little more than bare approbation of the use, I am still in doubt. And besides, if this Distinction were to be admitted, it would not relieve those, who are not satisfied of the lawfull use of some of those things. But it seems this distinction would not be admitted. (*Caledon Peace. p. 159, 160.*) As put all out of doubt, the Parliament-men long ago told us (*now contradicting it to us*) that no other Bill the House of Lords added a proviso, that the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity should be understood, but as obliging men [to the Use of it;] and that the House of Commons refusing, at a conference about it, they gave in such reasons against that Sense and provision to the Lords, upon which they did acquiesce, and cast it out.

Principle. Forbearing ~~and~~ another in love, &c.] And says one, If it may not take place [in things that may be left at liberty without apparent prejudice to purity, peace, and order,] I cannot apprehend to what purpose that precept, [*Eph. 4. 2.*] is in our Bible. And yet as the Doctor very ingeniously observes (*Irenic. p. 38.*) And which seems strange; the things men can least bear with one another, in ~~the~~ matters of liberty; and those things men have divided most upon; have been matters of uniformity; and wherein they have differed most, have been pretended things of indifferency.

Bird & p. 51. The most Sober and Learned Non-conformists of former times — utterly condemned Separation from our Churches as unlawful, &c.]

That Separation which the old Non-conformists condemned, I hope, Dissenters generally do not allow now. And they conceive, their present practice to be quite another thing. See *Corbet* (of *Church Unity, &c. p. 52.*) The case of those that are necessitated to — Yet seeking Union would gladly imbrace a reasonable accommodation, is much different from theirs, who upon choice, and wilfully sever themselves, because they love to be severed, so hee

The old Non-conformists when suspended, though they forbore Preaching in their own places, yet would not be idle; but were glad of opportunities of Preaching elsewhere, and rather than fail, Preached in private houses, notwithstanding their suspension *ab officio*.

Doctor *Gonge* (who is cited p. 51.) I took to be a conformist. An holy man, and Reverend Divine he was, whose memory is still precious. But let the question be, whether ordinary Ministers have not warrant by Gods word to hold on and Preach still, (as they have opportunity) though forbidden by the Laws and Government they live under, if forbidden for no cause, that will justly bear such a Censure and Sentence. And it is possible we may find an Orthodox Bishop speaking something to it. (Bishop *Bilson* of *Subject*. p. 236.) *Princes have no right to call or confirm Preachers, but to receive such as be sent of God, and give them liberty for their Preaching and security for their Persons; and if Princes refuse so to do, Gods Labourers must go forward with that which is commanded them from Heaven; not by disturbing Princes from their Thrones, &c.* And here consult Mr. *Baxter* (*Christian Directory*, p. 854. upon Quest. 80.) A Moral Duty (as he sayes) of stated necessity to the Church, and mens Salvation is not subjected to the will of men for Order sake, &c.

That the Apostles continued to Preach the Gospel, though forbidden by Rulers, is past all doubt or question. But then it is said, There is a difference between the Apostles case, and the case of ordinary Ministers. And indeed a great gradual difference betwixt them must be granted. Thus the Apostles being so extraordinarily called, and qualified for the work, and there being a greater necessity for their Preaching, and greater benefit to the Church by it, had they left off preaching, their sin had been cloathed with special aggravations, above what it had been in ordinary Ministers.

Yet magis & minus non variant speciem. Ordinary Ministers may be supposed under an obligation to Preach the word still, (though men forbid them to Preach, though not under such a special obligation as the Apostles were.) Mans Prohibition cannot make void Gods command. If God chargeth them to attend to their Ministry, men cannot discharge them. As the Doctor well noteth. (*Irenic.* p. 44.)

When two Laws are contrary the one to the other, the obligation to the higher Law takes away the obligation to the other. If men, cannot at their wills make those to be no Ministers, whom God hath called to the Ministry, neither can they at their Wills discharge them from

the work of the Ministry. And if still God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, there would seem to be a necessity of such forbidden Ministers preaching still, when without it many are not likely to come to the knowledge of the truth, and way to salvation. Though there be not so high a necessity of theirs, as of the Apostles Preaching. Shall we say, that they may suffer poor Souls to perish for whom Christ died, rather than relieve them (when they beg for some relief) contrary to Law? There had been a greater wo to the Apostles, and to the world (it is true) had the Apostles neglected, and laid down their work: yet that will not prove, there is no wo to ordinary Ministers, no wo to others, if they lay aside their work, when there is real need for them to be at work still. And what if the sound and orthodox had deserted their work, when the Arrians were set up against them? I know many urge the example of *Solomon's* deposing *Abiathar* from the Priesthood, 1 Kings 2. 26, 27. To which some answer, That *Abiathar* had no right, it belonged to another Line (Though that may be questioned: see 1 Sam. 2. 30. and Doctor *Lightf.*) But then it is further said, *Abiathar* was put out by two Princes that were inspired by God, who might do it by extraordinary direction, (1 Chron. 29. 22. 1 King. 2. 27.) And it is observed further, when *Abiathar* was thrust out, *Zadok* (not *Hophni* and *Phinehas*) succeeded. But that which is specially to be noted, is, that *Abiathar* was not deposed, but for a criminal matter: He was a man of death, worthy of death, as the Text says; so he deserved that and more. But it will not hence follow, that Ministers may be degraded from their office for no crime. I am thinking here of what the Doctor says (power of *Excom.* p. 30. 31.) That a Magistrate cannot repeal a just censure in the Church as to its spiritual effects; but he may suspend the temporal effect of it, in which case it is the duty of Pastors (n. 8.) to discharge their office, and acquiesce.

Now joyn issue with him here. The Magistrate cannot repeal a just censure of the Pastors in the Church, and yet hath a greater power even to null the Pastors Office, to make them no Pastors. Is not this a little strange? It is the duty of Pastors to discharge their Office in passing just censures, though against the command of the Magistrate; yet not to preach the Gospel, or to look upon themselves as Ministers of the Word, against his command. Though a little after he tells us, the Magistrates power in the Church is Cumulative, not privative. That is, it is not to take from the Church and Ministers thereof, the power and privileges granted

granted by Christ; but to put them in a better capacity of exercising and enjoying the same then they were in without it: And though we read of Bishops deposed, and Presbyters degraded by Bishops, and many Canons concerning the same; yet such degrading by the Churches power, if not according to Christ's Laws, (as the ancient Constitutions appointed, if a Bishop or Presbyter (unjustly) separated from his Wife, and in case of Fornication, Adultery, Perjury, &c. then such a course to be taken with them, otherwise) it is a thing to be questioned. For it may be supposed, I would say, certainly concluded, that Christ hath given no such power to the Church, or any Officers in it, as to deprive himself of it, or his own Laws of a binding force against theirs. As the Doctor hath a like expression of the power God gives to Magistrates, (*Irenic. p. 69.*) And that good man, who several years since so zealously pleaded this same cause the Doctor prosecutes in his Sermon, yet had preached, that as many had heretofore been called to bear witness to Christ's Prophetical Office, and to his Priestly Office; so the Kingly Office of Christ calleth for the testimony of the Saints (says he) that the Government is on his Shoulders administered by his own Officers and Ordinances; and this must be attested in the greatest tribulation, saddest sufferings in Fire and Blood that can befall us. (See *Mr. Cr. Case considered, p. 21.*) If now others shall arbitrarily turn out Christ's Officers, without any order or warrant from him, will not this look like an encroachment on the Kingly Office and Authority of Christ? And what should his Ministers do in such a case, but in as prudent and peaceable manner as they can, go on in discharging their Office under Christ, and patiently submit to what may be the pleasure of Rulers to inflict for their so doing? And otherwise it would be sad with the Church sometimes. If Rulers have power to make Laws, nullifying the Office of a thousand Ministers, whereupon they must all cease from the work of the Ministry; then if they please, they may make other Laws to take off as many more; and thus it should be in their power to deprive the Church of all her Teachers, or she should have none but such as were the servants of men, and would do just what Rulers at any time please to command.

P. 52. *Let me beseech them to consider the common danger that threatens us all by means of our Divisions.*]

Here I say (as *Second Discourse of the Relig. of Engl. p. 43.*) could the Protestant Conformists, or Non-conformists, either of them upon their own single account, if one should exterminate, or utterly disable

able the other, be so well secured against Popery, as now they are by their common interest? ---How much more in a state of Union, might their strength increase against their common Adversaries? But further I wish it was seriously considered, whether they are most to be charged, as causing our divisions, who would gladly unite, but cannot upon the terms imposed without sin; or they that will not abate them so much, where the imposition may be sinful, but a relaxation without doubt is lawful? They that will not abate such terms for union with Dissenters, do they not in effect tell the world, that they have no desire of an union with them?

P. 53. *Not to give encouragement to rash intemperate zeal, is good advice. And have not such as [Curse ye Meroz] need of it too! I wish we had all a greater zeal for peace & unity; yea, a greater zeal for true piety, & the power of Religion, which would do more to cement us, than Uniformity in all our Rites and Ceremonies.*

P. 54. *Not to be always complaining of Hardships and Persecutions; is another advice the Doctor gives us. And if I knew any of my Brethren, that had need of it, I would commend to them that late Piece of a Non-conformist, Mr. Hieron's Spiritual Rejoicing. Though there be some bitter Ingredients in the Cup of their Affliction (as the Psalmist said, it was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I would have born it; but, —) that Protestants should fall thus on Protestants, on such as are one with them in all points that are necessary to Christian Unity (see Irenic. p. 62.) this is a little sad. Though sometimes Losers have leave to speak, and tell their Losses; yet some the Doctor seems to point at under this advice are moved to speak (I am persuaded) more from a sense of others sin, than their own sufferings. And they whom I most converse with, would make light of past sufferings, and prepare for greater trials. And what are we better than our Fathers?*

As for those the Doctor speaks of, Whereas the severity of Laws hath been tempered with so much gentleness in the execution of them, that others have as much complained of indulgence, as they of persecution. (Where the Doctor seems not very much grieved or concerned for the affliction of Joseph.) Those others (I am afraid) forget Psal. 109. 16, &c. And that of our Saviour; With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And that of the Apostle James, He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.

P. 55. *They want the ingenuity of Adoni Bezek, to reflect on the Thumbs and the Toes, which they have cut off, and think themselves bound to do again, if it were in their power.]*

Here are keen words, but (I hope) few of his dissenting Brethren will feel themselves touched with them.

—P. 56. *The true controversy is not about the Reasonableness of Uniformity; but who shall have the power of prescribing the Rules of it.*]

The true Controversie betwixt him and his dissenting Brethren is, Whether men have power of making Rules, that will cast out of the Ministry, and cast out of Christian Communion such as are to be admitted and taken in by the Rule of the Word? And whether that Uniformity be not the cause of division, and indeed opposite to true Church-Unity, which casts out any, which ought to be received as Ministers or Members of the Church, according to Scripture-Rule?

P. 56. *It is hard to understand, if occasional communion be lawful, that constant communion should not be a duty.*

Enough hath been said before (I hope) to clear this. And if a London-Merchant judgeth occasional communion with a Dutch Church lawful, will it follow, that then constant communion with the same is a duty?

To what follows, others may say, if those of the Doctor's way, instead of pleading for the removing of dividing terms, (which would prepare for a close union indeed) *Indeavour to darken and confound things, and cast mists before mens eyes, that they who might do most towards the healing of our breaches, cannot see their way clear before them; all understanding men will conclude, they prefer some little interests of their own before the honour of Christ, and the peace of his Church.*

P. 58. *An universal toleration is that Trojan Horse, which brings in our enemies without being seen.*]

This his dissenting Brethren are not fond on, but greatly dread. They could be well satisfied with such a liberty, as the Doctor pleaded for himself, (*Irenic. p. 121.*) and if we go to the merits of the cause, may be proved not unreasonable for the one part to desire, and for the other to grant.

P. 59. *So that upon the whole matter, if we would consult the honour of God and Religion, the peace and tranquillity of the Church we live in,—we ought to follow the Apostles advice, in walking by the same Rule, and in minding the same things.*]

But sure it is, the Apostle looks higher, and aims at greater matters there, than uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies devised by men. (*As Irenic. p. 66.*) *We see the primitive Christians did not make so much of any Uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies; nay, I scarce think any Churches in the primitive times can be produced that did exactly in all things*

things observe the same Customs. And so upon a due consideration of the whole matter, we may conclude, the honour of God and Religion may be as much promoted, the peace and tranquillity of the Church as well provided for, the great designs of our Enemies as surely prevented, and the true Protestant Religion as much secured and established, without requiring uniformity in such things, or pressing men so much unto the same.

I conclude now with the Doctor's earnest desire, with which he closeth his *Irenicum*: (A Collect very suitable and proper for these times)

That the Wise and Gracious God would send us one heart, and one way, that he would be the Composer of our Differences, and the Repairer of our Breaches; that of our strange Divisions, and unchristian Animosities, (while we pretend to serve the Prince of Peace) we may at last see

T H E E N D.

Glory to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men: *Luk. 2. 14.*

F I N I S.
